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Short Remarks on the Political and Social Writings of Reverend Anthony Walke of Princess Anne County, Virginia & a Concise & Impartial Account of the Causes of Their Origins & Progress

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SHORT REMARKS ON THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL WRITINGS OF
REVEREND ANTHONY WALKE OF PRINCESS ANNE COUNTY, VIRGINIA
& A CONCISE & IMPARTIAL ACCOUNT OF THE CAUSES OF
THEIR ORIGIN & PROGRESS

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Masters of Arts
History

by
Roberta Elizabeth Vogt
December, 2011

Accepted by:
Dr. Paul C. Anderson, Committee Chair
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Dr. James B. Jeffries

ABSTRACT

The following thesis examines multiple social and political topics in the largely unstudied writings of Reverend Anthony Walke (c. 1755-1814) of Princess Anne County, Virginia. His papers reside at the Filson Historical Society in Louisville, Kentucky, as well as appearing in Virginia newspapers of the period. Walke's works comprise more than four hundred pages of primary source documents that relate to late eighteenth-century Virginia, and span the period of 1786 through 1805.

My research emphasizes his Revolutionary War pamphlet, *Remarkable Occurrences during the unhappy American War, & a concise & impartial Account of the Causes of its Origin & Progress: a Pamphlet, 1786*; his essay on slavery, *Short Remarks on the Treatment of Negros, 1793*; and, his writings on the French Revolution. This small fraction of his entire body of work contains important reflections on eighteenth-century American society and the ideological changes with which it was confronted. Central to these changes was the question of slavery and the definition of liberty. Walke's writings reveal the scope of the debates that were occurring during the birth of the American republic and the demise of the old colonial world that had come before it.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my father, Dr. John Leonard Vogt, who, among many other things, instilled in me a love for the history of the State of Virginia.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank many individuals for the assistance they rendered me during the research and preparation of this work. Dr. Paul C. Anderson, Dr. Alan C. Grubb, and Dr. James B. Jeffries, all of whom sat on my thesis committee provided me invaluable feedback and guidance. Last, but certainly not least, I wish to thank my father (my invisible fourth reader) for his assistance with doing research in Virginia records and helping me at times to untangle two hundred and fifty years of history. Special thanks go out to Jim Holmberg and the staff of the Filson Historical Society, who assisted me during my research for the week I spent in Louisville poring through Anthony Walke's writings. Belinda Nash, the house director for Ferry Farm in Virginia Beach has been extremely helpful during my visits to Virginia, as well as performing a herculean effort to preserve a small piece of Old Princess Anne, despite daunting challenges. Lastly, the South Carolina Chapter of the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America deserves great thanks for their generous underwriting of my research in the form of a scholarship for 2011.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
TITLE PAGE	i
ABSTRACT.....	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iv
 CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. BIOGRAPHY	5
III. WALKE AS THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY GENTLEMAN.....	14
IV. REMARKABLE OCCURRENCES DURING THE UNHAPPY AMERICAN WAR, & A CONCISE & IMPARTIAL ACCOUNT OF THE CAUSES OF ITS ORIGIN & PROGRESS. A PAMPHLET. 1786.....	21
V. WALKE’S WRITINGS IN THE <i>VIRGINIA CHRONICLE</i> IN RESPONSE TO NORFOLK REACTIONS TO THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.....	60
VI. SHORT REMARKS ON SLAVERY & THE TREATMENT OF NEGROES –1793	81
APPENDICES	124
A: List of Anthony Walke’s Tithables, Lands, and Wheel Carriages, for the Year 1775	125

PHOTOS.....	126
A: A post-March 1865 Photograph of the Old Burial Ground and Plantation Kitchen at Fairfields	127
B: Photograph of a Female Slave Posed with a Spinning Wheel in Front of the Plantation Kitchen.....	128
C: Photograph of the Portrait of Jane Bolling Randolph Walke.....	129
D. Photograph of a Drawing of a House, Possibly a Rendition of Fairfield, Found in Walke’s Compilation <i>To the Reader</i>	130
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	131

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

A transitional figure, Reverend Anthony Walke of Princess Anne County, Virginia bridged the old English colonial world, to which he was born and the new republic of which he became a citizen. His writings on slavery impart changing notions of morality that touched upon questions of liberty and freedom and what the question meant for blacks; ultimately, these themes are interconnected with his discourses on revolutionary and early federal politics that incorporate concepts of republican virtue, civic participation, and his notions of an emerging national identity for all Americans. This work focuses specifically on his *Remarkable Occurrences during the unhappy American War, & a concise & impartial Account of the Causes of its Origin & Progress, 1786*, his political essays on the revolution in France, and *Short Remarks on the Treatment of Negros, 1793*. The subject of France was, in particular, a keen preoccupation of his, for it represented a revolutionary and republican model against which the United States could be judged. France contained both his aspirations for a sound republican government and also the dangers that lurked for the future of the United States should the American experiment fail. The following analysis of his writings covers only a fraction of his existing body of work and does not address his many other essays on religion and politics.

A study of his writings offers insights into Virginia's pre- and post-Revolutionary society and a greater understanding of the political and religious discussions occurring within the region at the end of the century. They illuminate the views of someone who, as a member of the clergy and of the privileged gentry, stood at the cusp of the decline of the colonial world that had existed up to the Revolution. Eighteenth-century Virginians witnessed multiple social and political cataclysms, beginning in the First Great Awakening and extending through the Revolutionary War. Economic and social upheaval rapidly transformed the social class that had previously controlled Virginia's political structure. Traditional notions of class distinctions eroded, and Walke's writings reflect the changes that had eclipsed the gentry's conception of social control.

The third Episcopal Bishop of Virginia, William Meade, described the world in which Walke lived when, in 1857, he wrote regarding the decline of well-to-do Virginia families and lamented the social demise of Lynnhaven Parish in Princess Anne County:

Our prospects in this parish are now and have been for a long time discouraging. Formerly this was one of the most flourishing parishes in Virginia. Many circumstances have concurred to promote its declension. In my early youth I remember to have heard my parents speak of it as having what I called the best society in Virginia. The families were interesting, hospitable, given to visiting and social pleasures. They whose words I quote had some experience of it. Both of them were connected with Rev. Anthony Walke, whose mother was a Randolph. At his glebe they were sometimes inmates. The social glass, the rich feast, the card table, the dance and the horse-race were all freely indulged in throughout the county, and what has been the result? Bankruptcy and ruin, and untimely death of those who once formed the gay society of the county. Cards, the bottle, the horse-race, the continual feasts,-these were the

destroyers. In no part of Virginia has the destruction of all that was old been greater.¹

Meade's social indictment of Walke and the society to which he belonged does not acknowledge a couple of important facts – namely, that the two men's families were very closely related, and that they were products of the same social milieu that dominated eighteenth-century Tidewater Virginia. Walke was a nephew by marriage to Richard Kidder Meade, who was Washington's aide-de-camp and father of Bishop Meade, as well as being a cousin to both Thomas Jefferson and John Randolph of Roanoke through his mother. Meade's observations did carry a ring of truth to them. Certainly, by the 1850s Princess Anne County's society and economy had changed. The eighteenth-century gentry to which both Walke and Meade's father (both men were only a few years apart in age) belonged had been largely extinguished. Social leveling, immigration, the industrial revolution, and the impending Civil War had changed Princess Anne County and Lynnhaven Parish, and the old society of which Bishop Meade spoke was lost to time. Within a few years, the Union occupation of the Chesapeake and its subsequent emancipation of Tidewater slaves would resolve the region's question of enslavement of blacks once and for all. True liberty and citizenship for blacks would be harder to achieve. Meade, though, was writing almost fifty years after Reverend Walke's death, and the issues that affected Virginia were not the same as those that preoccupied the men of Walke's generation. Reverend Anthony Walke's writings offer a glimpse into his world and the public and private arguments of socially and politically prominent

¹Bishop William Meade, *Old Churches, Ministers and Families of Virginia, In Two Volumes: Volume 1* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1891), 250.

Virginians on issues, such as slavery and the development of civic republicanism at the close of the eighteenth century.

Walke's writings often exhibit conflicting values and inconsistency. He vacillated politically and intellectually not because of some inherent personal inconstancy, although individual experience and outlook of course often affect the decision to embrace certain ideological positions; his opinions changed and developed like those of all Americans at the time. His writings reflect alternately the confusion, uncertainty, disillusionment and later optimism and renewed confidence in the American enterprise. Some of his writings are unique in their intellectual possibilities; others are more prosaic in their concerns. Walke's writings limn a description of a man not merely of his times, but for his times.

CHAPTER TWO

BIOGRAPHY

Anthony Walke's early life, for the moment, is shrouded in mystery. Whether he was born at his mother's family's plantation, "Curles Neck," in Henrico County, Virginia on the James River or at his father's family seat, "Fairfields," in Princess Anne County, is unclear. There are no documents yet discovered that reveal the place or year of his birth, and dates found in extant literature are unsubstantiated by documentary evidence. He would have been born, at the latest, in the year before the unusual death of his mother, Jane Bolling Randolph Walke (1729-5/28/1756), making the date of his birth no later than August of 1755. The Muscarelle Museum at the College of William and Mary owns an undated portrait of "Mrs. Anthony Walke II, nee Jane Bolling Randolph," painted by the famed English portrait painter John Wollaston. Wollaston did not settle in the Appomattox/James River area until 1753. The painting was likely completed between that year and Reverend Anthony Walke's birth. This further supports the idea that he was born sometime between 1753 and 1755.² According to an oral legend, Jane Randolph Walke would often observe the slaves tanning hides at Fairfields and decided that she would try the white powder that they used to bleach the skins on herself, as it was the fashion of the day for women to have as porcelain of a complexion as possible. Her

²For information on John Wollaston, see "About the Artist."
Accessed by: <http://muscarelle.wmwikis.net/1963005> on 11/16/2011.

repeated use of this tanning mixture that contained high levels of an arsenic compound precipitated her painful, early death at the age of twenty-seven.³

Anthony, her only child, was left motherless as an infant and was consequently reared by his father, Anthony Walke II (1/3/1726 -10/28/1779), and his second wife, Mary Moseley, who became the only mother he ever knew. His father's will, probated in 1782, bequeathed to him, in addition to a tremendous amount of land and personal wealth, several items that belonged to his mother that he wanted his son to have, namely, "my Suit of embroidered Curtains, in Remembrance of his Mother, who took great pains in working them, the two neat Trunks, Gold Studs and every other Article that belonged to my late Wife Jane Walke, now in my possession, my Father's Walnut Scrutoire and Clock, a piece of Gold coined in the Year sixteen hundred and Nine weighing about four Pounds nine Shillings which belonged to my Great-Grand-Father..."⁴

There are no details about his childhood, young adulthood, or even where he received his education. He completed his first known writing, a Revolutionary War pamphlet entitled *Remarkable Occurrences during the unhappy American War & a concise & impartial Account of the Causes of its Origin & Progress*, between 1786 and 1787. Frustratingly, his writings provide few clues to the biographical details of his life. Inquiries of the existing universities at the time which he might have attended have yielded no information. As an adult, he did have connections with the College of William and Mary, although the college's records do not indicate that he ever attended.

³Author's visit to Ferry Farm in the City of Virginia Beach, Virginia in March of 2011 and conversation with Belinda Nash, house curator. The date of Jane Bolling Randolph Walke's death is inscribed on a plate of an unattributed portrait of her and Anthony Walke II at the house museum.

⁴Codicil to Will of Anthony Walke II, probated 14 March 1782 with additional codicil 9 May, 1782: Library of Virginia, Princess Anne County Virginia Deed Book No. 17, 1780-1782 (n.p.).

In 1799, he wrote to his in-law, St. George Tucker, at the College, asking Tucker, who was a law professor there, to take his son Anthony IV on as a student and informing Tucker that he was “desirous that my son Anthony should have some Knowledge of the common Law, as well as natural and moral Philosophy...”⁵ It is likely that he acquired his own education through a private tutor or perhaps at a local academy.

By the time of his ordination as a minister in the Protestant Episcopal Church of America in 1788, he was fully conversant in Latin and Greek, as his later writings are heavily peppered with phrases and quotations in both. It is also possible that he acquired an advanced education abroad, perhaps in England, although that has not been established. The American Revolution, which occurred precisely at the time that he was coming of age, would, however, have disrupted normal avenues of education for a young man of the time. Moreover, there is no evidence that he served in any military capacity in the war. His lack of service is not unusual, since only roughly sixty percent of all colonists participated in the war effort, either as revolutionaries or Loyalists.⁶

So far as it is known, no primary source evidence survives to corroborate the traditionally-cited date of marriage between Anthony Walke and Anne McColley McClenahan of Princess Anne County on January 15, 1776; however, their first son, Anthony, was born in January of 1778, lending credence to the generally accepted marriage date. Anne was the daughter of David McClenahan and a member of a family that had been active in the shipping business in the Chesapeake since the early decades of

⁵Letter from Reverend Anthony Walke to St. George Tucker, dated April 30, 1799, the College of William and Mary Archives, Earl Swem Library. A scanned copy of this letter was sent by Benjamin Bromley of the library to the author on June 2, 2011.

⁶See E. Wayne Carp’s essay, “The Wars of the American Revolution.” Accessed by: <http://revolution.h-net.msu.edu/essays/carp.html> on 11/16/2011.

the eighteenth century. With Anne, Anthony fathered five children: Anthony IV, Edwin, Susan M., David Meade, and Anne M. Walke. They probably lost at least one child in infancy, as is indicated by his undated poem in his *A Miscellany*, titled “On the Death of R.W. - aged 21 Months, 12 Days.”⁷

Anne McClenahan Walke died on or about February 7, 1805, and Reverend Anthony commemorated this event in his ledger with a poem titled, “To Nancy in Heaven.”⁸ On July 13th of the same year, he married the widow Anne Newton Fisher (his eldest son Anthony providing the surety bond)⁹, with whom he had four more children, Jane Eliza Anne Newton Walke, John Newton Walke, Lemuel N. Walke, and Thomas Walke. The last two named children did not survive into adulthood.

Anthony’s father’s death in 1779 left him very secure financially, with little need to aggressively pursue business interests, although he most probably continued to operate his father’s merchant business in Norfolk and Petersburg. Sometime after the conclusion of the Revolutionary War, he embraced the idea of becoming a minister in the newly-formed Protestant Episcopal Church of America. His father and grandfather had been members of the Vestry at Lynnhaven Parish, (as well as both being members of the Virginia House of Burgesses), and Anthony Jr. decided upon a career of being a minister to his community. On March 29th, of 1788 at a Vestry meeting for Lynnhaven Parish, the

⁷Reverend Anthony Walke, “On the Death of R.W. – aged 21 Months, 12 Days,” *A Miscellany*, Anthony Walke Papers, 1784-1805, Special Collections, The Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky, undated.

⁸Walke, “To Nancy in Heaven,” *A Miscellany*, February 7, 1805.

⁹Elizabeth B. Wingo. *Marriages of Princess Anne County, Virginia: 1799-1821: Volume II* (Norfolk: published privately, 1968), n.p.

Accessed by:

http://www.archive.org/stream/marriagesofp217991821wing/marriagesofp217991821wing_djvu.txt on 11/16/2011.

vestrymen recommended “Anthony Walke Gentleman” to the Right Reverend Bishop White of Philadelphia, noting that Walke wished to “obtain Letters of Ordination.” Having concurred that he met with their approval, they issued a collective statement urging Walke’s nomination:

We the subscribers Vestrymen of the said Parish beg leave to recommend to the Right Revd. Bishop White, Anthony Walke Gentn. As a person of probity and good demeanour, who wishes to obtain Letters of Ordination, and hereby certify that on the sixth day of May next there will be a vacancy I the said Parish for a Minister of the Episcopal Church, and we are willing to induct the said Anthony Walke into the same when ordained.¹⁰

After his nomination he travelled to Philadelphia in the late spring, where he probably received his ordination by Reverend White on May 25, 1788, the same day as his travelling companion, John Woodville.¹¹ Four days later, on his return through Virginia, he and Woodville visited and spent the night with George Washington at his Mount Vernon estate.¹² Woodville later became the Episcopal minister in Culpeper, Virginia. In addition to the sociability of such a visit to the hero of the American Revolution, Walke was likely eager to sound out Washington on political topics and Virginia’s impending constitutional convention, to which he was selected as a delegate from Princess Anne, along with his cousin Thomas Walke III. The following year, he was

¹⁰Edward W. James, Ed. *The Lower Norfolk County Virginia Antiquary, Vol. II* (Richmond, Virginia: Whittet & Shepperson, General Printers, 1895), 18.

¹¹Dr. Phillip Slaughter, *Genealogical and Historical Notes on Culpeper County, Virginia* (Culpeper, Virginia: Raleigh Travers Green, 1900), 26.

¹²Donald Jackson and Dorothy Twohig, eds., May 29, 1788. “The Diaries of George Washington,” *The Papers of George Washington, Vol. 5*, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia: 1979). Accessed by: [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mgw:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(wd0540\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mgw:@field(DOCID+@lit(wd0540))) on 11/16/2011.

one of the presidential electors from Virginia and supported Washington's bid for the presidency during the nation's first election in Philadelphia.¹³

That spring and early summer was quite busy for Anthony Walke. Having been ordained in Philadelphia in May, he attended, as a delegate, the Virginia convention in Richmond to ratify the federal Constitution. On July 3, he appeared once more before the Lynnhaven Vestry at Old Donation Church, producing his papers from Bishop White and swearing "I do hereby agree to be conformable to the Doctrine, Discipline and Worship of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and do stipulate that I hold the appointment of Incumbent in the said Parish, subject to removal, upon the determination of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in this State."¹⁴ One of Reverend Walke's first duties as a minister was to perform the marriage between John Harrison and Mary Kays on twentieth of that month, one of many he performed over the next twenty or more years.¹⁵

Local lore in Princess Anne County has cast him in a colorful light, and a reputation has come down through time of the liveliness and eccentricity of his character. According to a local tradition of Virginia and for this matter of the eighteenth-century British gentry and aristocracy as well, "the hunting horn and a pack of baying foxhounds took precedence over the Book of Common Prayer as far as the Rev. Anthony Walke of Princess Anne County was concerned." The description of his days at Lynnhaven Parish suggests of him:

¹³Gordon DenBoer, *The Documentary History of the First Federal Elections, 1788-1790, Volume 4* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 166.

¹⁴James, *The Lower Norfolk County Virginia Antiquary*, 18.

¹⁵*Ibid*, 17.

On his mother's side of the family he was a direct descendant of Pocahontas, whose father, Powhatan, was the most powerful chieftain in Tidewater Virginia...This wild strain in his blood could easily have accounted for his predilection to field sports. Walke's father, one of the wealthiest Virginians of his day, was a great advocate of the 'social glass, the rich feast, the card table, and the horse race.' And when he died he left his son well fixed. Walke was the rector of Lynnhaven Parish for many years, and his 'mild clear voice and solemnity of manner in reading the church service' were remembered by the more pious of his flock... According to those who chose to recall the picturesque side of the Rev. Walke's character, it was his habit to tether his horse Silverheels near the door of the church where he was officiating. And if, during the service, he heard the sound of the hunting horns, he would immediately descend from his high pulpit, turn over the service to his clerk, Dick Edwards, stalk down the aisle, and ride away in the direction of the baying foxhounds as fast as Silverheels could carry him.¹⁶

His family's involvement in Lynnhaven Parish affairs far predated his tenure as minister. In 1736, after the creation of a new church building, Walke's grandfather, Col. Anthony Walke I, as a member of the Vestry, made a motion for the creation of a free school for orphan boys within the parish, to be headed by Reverend John Dickson. "On a motion of Anthony Walke, the old church would be a convenient place to make a public school for instructing children in learning and for no other use or purpose whatsoever." In 1774, Dickson donated the school and property back to the parish specifying that parish income be used for "an able and discreet teacher in the Latin and Greek languages and the mixed mathematics, to teach and instruct therein such number of the poor male orphan children being natives of the parish, as rents and income would justify." After

¹⁶Account by George Holbert Tucker cited in C.W. Tazewell's *Walke Family Scrapbook* (Virginia Beach: Self-Published, 1982), n.p.
Accessed by: <http://freepages.family.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~tazewell/wlksb-dft.html> on 11/16/2011.

Dickson's death in 1777, the school continued to be managed by the Vestry, and after 1803 Walke served alternately as its headmaster, along with the Reverend James Simpson.¹⁷

In addition to his ministerial activities and involvement with the Dickson Free School, Walke continued to engage in commercial activity and dabbled in race horses, like his father, as is indicated by his purchase of the English Thoroughbred "Restless," in May 1802, by "Anthony Walke and Son, Norfolk, Virginia."¹⁸ "Restless," bred by Lord Archibald Hamilton, had run in England from 1792 to 1795 and had won the Doncaster stakes.¹⁹ This purchase suggests that Reverend Walke, having resigned his first tenure as Old Donation Minister on October 10, 1800²⁰, continued his merchant enterprise with his eldest son, Anthony. He resumed the ministry for one more year, serving there from 1812 to 1813.²¹ The following spring, on March 25, 1814, he swore out his will, perhaps sensing that he was in failing health. After apportioning his slaves, two plantations, bank stock and personal wealth between his children, he stipulated one special condition, namely that his younger "children should be educated in virtuous Habits & useful Science."²² His life had been rich in experience, yet *The Norfolk Herald* inauspiciously

¹⁷"Old Donation Church Website," Accessed by: <http://1bob9.blogspot.com> on 11/16/2011.

¹⁸"Thoroughbred Bloodlines," Accessed by: <http://www.bloodlines.net/TB/Studbook/ZEarlyAmericans.htm> on 11/16/2011.

¹⁹ Ibid. "Early Studbook Index," Accessed by: <http://www.bloodlines.net/TB/Studbook/EarlyQR.htm> on 11/16/2011.

²⁰*Colonial Vestrybook of Lynnhaven Parish Princess Anne County Virginia: 1723-1786*. Transcribed and edited by George Carrington Mason. (Newport News, Virginia: Self-Published, 1949), 124.

²¹Old Donation Church Website.

²²Will of Reverend Anthony Walke III, probated 5 September 1814: Library of Virginia, Princess Anne County Virginia Deed Book No. 31, 1814-1816 (n.p.)

noted his passing on August 15, 1814 with only one line: “DIED-On the 15th inst. The Reverend ANTHONY WALKE, of Princess Anne County.”²³

And such is the most of what we know of Anthony Walke beyond his writings, which nonetheless suggest much about him as a gentleman and thinker and provide fascinating insights into the man’s opinions on the important issues of his day and the new nation come into being.

²³The Norfolk Herald, Tuesday August 16, 1814, the Library of Virginia.

CHAPTER THREE

WALKE AS THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY GENTLEMAN

In some Countries cruel Despotism prevails, in others Tyranny is exercised either by a corrupt Aristocracy, or a severe capricious Democracy, who adopt with ferocious Joy Plans of Assassination & Plunder, regardless of the Will of God, & the Dictates of Reason. It is our Happiness to live under a Government where the People are equally represented, where two Branches act as Checks on each other, with an executive Power easily changed, & where all publick Officers are responsible....If he should pursue any unwise System, contrary to the Will of a Majority, I ask whether the People ought not to bestow their Suffrages upon a Citizen of superior Judgment? -²⁴

Anthony Walke was, if nothing else, a bundle of contradictions. Born an English subject in the 1750s, he objected to the colonies' goal of independence and then by the 1790s had heartily embraced his role as a virtuous American citizen. He had remarkably egalitarian views on blacks (and women, as well) for a man of his era, and he hoped fervently in private for the abolition of slavery; nonetheless, he was the largest slaveholding Episcopal minister in Tidewater Virginia and never manumitted his own slaves. He was firmly aware of his position of stature and privilege in his community, expecting deference due his station; he also believed in assisting the less fortunate, and he proposed a luxury tax on carriages, trusting that "a large Majority will chearfully (sic) pay a Tax on that or any Luxury of Life, rather than the laboring Farmer should be burdened with a Land-Tax. The latter would operate like a Tax on Corn, & be injurious

²⁴Walke as "Honestus," "A Hint to the People on Good Government," March 1797, *To the Reader*, Anthony Walke Papers, 1784-1805, Special Collections, The Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky.

to the Population.”²⁵ He denounced the overly ambitious as lacking virtue, yet he pursued an ambitious course within his community. He lamented the demise of the Anglican Church, yet he became one of the Episcopal Church’s first Virginia ministers. Lastly, while he was a wealthy member of the gentry and had little need to improve his station in life, he sought out a religious role, when other men around him were content to pursue only riches. Oftentimes, he was likely changing his positions because of circumstances and probably seeking to maintain a middle course in the midst of great conflicts, such as the Revolution. Some of these contradictions were more fundamental; they created a cognitive dissonance for him from which he probably never extricated himself, particularly in the case of slavery. An elucidation of the eighteenth-century values that defined the ideal of being a gentleman and the conditions of the changing society in which he lived may resolve some of these intellectual conflicts.

A gentleman in Walke’s world came into his position by exhibiting fundamental characteristics. As Emory Evans observes, by the first few decades of the eighteenth-century, many established Virginia families had acquired all those characteristics “that Lawrence Stone has explained to be a member of the squirearchy: ‘great power (at some point in the family’s history), participation in local administration, substantial landed wealth, broad but not deep education, a generous lifestyle and high status.’”²⁶ Implicit in this set of characteristics was a profound concern for sociability, generosity, personal and social restraint, a love of luxury and an understanding one’s place in a chain of

²⁵Walke, “An Essay – 1794,” *A Miscellany*.

²⁶Emory G. Evans, *A Topping People: the Rise and Decline of Virginia’s Old Political Elite, 1680-1790* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2009), 170.

dependency. Young men were educated in the classics, religion, moral and natural philosophy, as well as ancient languages. They were expected to know how to comport themselves socially and how to defer to their superiors. These hierarchical relationships also required adopting a paternalistic attitude with white men of lesser stature, as well as with slaves. The Walke family fit the model of the commonly understood definition of Virginia gentry. They were certainly not the same Virginians who were fighting Indians and opening the frontier. Their horizons pointed towards east to England and the Caribbean and not to the west.

Describing the values of Virginia gentry in the decades preceding the American Revolution, Jefferson's biographer Dumas Malone wrote, "...one of these, unquestionably, was that of public responsibility. It need not and should not be assumed that the members of the ruling gentry were neglectful of their private interests; but the term 'disinterested' often appears in the language of the time, and if they were a privileged group...they were notably responsible--serving as magistrates, vestrymen, officers of the militia, and burgesses, and representing the interests of their localities and constituents with noteworthy faithfulness. Rarely in history have privilege and power been so closely joined with recognized responsibility...Loyalty to the tradition of public responsibility is not the only possible explanation of the incalculable public services rendered by the greatest generation of Virginians...it is one that is inescapable."²⁷ A reading of Walke's material bears out Malone's assessment. While Walke himself did

²⁷Dumas Malone, "Mr. Jefferson and the Traditions of Virginia," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 75, no. 2 (Apr., 1967), 138.

Published by: Virginia Historical Society

Accessed by: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4247297> on 09/10/2011.

not use the word “disinterested” often in his text, the equivalent term “impartial” appears quite frequently. The belief that men should perform an action on behalf of the supreme good and devoid of their own personal interest, whether that was civic or religious in nature, inheres in all of Walke’s writings and, by extension, his world view. A more predominate term in his writings is that of “reason” and “reasonableness,” and likewise “happy,” “happiness,” “unhappy” and “unhappiness.” Malone asserted that the other characteristic of Virginia gentry was the dedication to reason, arguing that “‘reasonableness’ suggests tolerance, judiciousness, and common sense,” and these values formed the basis of the political society of the day.²⁸ Walke’s use of language in his text provides an insight into how he conceived of happiness and reason and of himself, for in his mind he, indeed, was a “Citizen of superior Judgment.”²⁹ Happiness was lack of strife, moderation in all manner of things, aesthetics, tranquility, consensus, truth, a belief in the inherent reasonableness of his fellow man, and, most importantly, a love of God. Walke constructed his notion of how happiness, reason and religion were interdependent, by asserting:

Some Men are too apt to disregard the Admonition of Reason, & following the Impulse of their Passions to commit heinous Crimes. Such Conduct must proceed from Inattention to their dependent State, Ingratitude to the supreme Being, & a false Idea of Happiness. The true Idea of Happiness is that it is inseperable (sic) from sincere Religion & Virtue. Alienated from his God Man is wretched & forlorn, & like murderous Cain trembles at the Rustling of a Leaf: But He, who lives under a Sense of the Divine Favour, & does no injury to any one, enjoys true Peace of Mind, delighting in the Benignity & Smiles of the

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Walke as “Honestus,” “A Hint to the People on Good Government,” *To the Reader*, March 1797.

Deity, who aids him in every virtuous Effort, & trusting to his Protection not only under the Trials of this Life, but through the Ages of Eternity.³⁰

For Walke, these conceptions of happiness and reasonableness extended into the political realm. He was certainly grounded in eighteenth-century Enlightenment thought, as evidenced by his citations of works he consulted and the way in which he articulated his theories about social order. His writings on theology contain distinctly deistic strains, as was the intellectual fashion of the day. Unlike many eighteenth-century *philosophes* and Enlightenment thinkers Walke believed that religion and reason could go hand-in-hand. Religion was not to be excised from political and social behavior, because inconsistencies had been exposed by men of learning in the name of reason; they complemented one another in his world view. He took to task Thomas Paine's popular tome, *The Age of Reason*, for suggesting that adherence to the Bible was largely irrelevant, because, according to Paine, it comprised a series of elaborate fables:

No Man can say that He is absolved from the Obligations of Religion & Morality, whatever He may wish, because Thomas Paine has exposed ancient Errors in the Creeds of certain Professors of Christianity, & laughed at the Bible. Religion & Morality are founded on a much firmer Basis than ancient Creeds, & Mr. Paine might have known that the erroneous Doctrines of the Church have been long set in their proper Light by the ablest Writers. I would not have it thought that Mr. Paine has made a great Discovery, though I admire his Writings, or that all the Christian World are so ignorant as to be Idolaters, to suppose 'that three are one, that Shedding innocent Blood was ever pleasing in the Light of God, or that ever Men were infallible.'³¹

³⁰ Walke, "An Essay on Religion, Nov. 1794," *To the Reader*.

³¹ *Ibid.*

Summing up his belief that religion formed the foundation of all human activity, Walke cited an unattributed source and opined that the individual's duty to God and his fellow man had religious and moral bases, since "God had endowed all Men with Reason," thus providing them the "Freedom of Will" and the ability to choose right and wrong and follow the "Dictates of Conscience."³² According to Walke, self-interest had been planted in men's hearts by the "Author of Nature" (an example of deistic terminology in his writings), and he considered it essential for self-preservation. He felt that this divinely-planted love of self prodded men to seek out that which promotes happiness and to avoid those things that produce the opposite. He warned, however, that men are capable of deluding themselves into embracing goals believed to be in their self-interest when, in fact, they are not. Here the "Light of Reason" had a role to play because it guided man in the "Paths of Truth" and showed him "what is really good, & certainly conducive to Happiness; not only at the present Day, but to the utmost Extent of his Existence."³³

Most importantly, the last quarter of the eighteenth century witnessed more social changes than any period heretofore. The economy during the Revolutionary War was dire, owing to the depreciation of currency, lack of specie, breakdown of traditional trading patterns and the general insecurity that these factors engendered. Insecurity was not just confined to financial concerns. This pattern of economic instability continued throughout much of the 1780s, the very time that Walke wrote out his bleak assessment

³²Ibid.

³³Walke, "On the Duties of Man, Sermon 11. Mark, Ch. 12., v. 29, 30, 31," *To the Reader*, undated.

of the American Revolution. The formulation of the Articles of Confederation in the mid 1770s, their ratification in 1781, and their subsequent abolishment produced profound uncertainties about the viability of the new government for all Americans. After the dissolution of the Articles of Confederation, Americans faced the task of garnering support within all thirteen states for the new federal Constitution, a process in which Walke participated for his home state of Virginia at its ratification convention. Passage of the Constitution also demanded discussion on the Bill of Rights, and all Americans were searching for definitions of what their rights and responsibilities were. Concomitant with this flux was the new attention that the question of slavery demanded, the creation of abolitionist societies (particularly in England) and the propagation of anti-slavery ideas in the countries in which the institution existed. Inherent in this question was that of liberty. For a generation of men who argued for liberty for themselves, was liberty exclusively the purview of whites? The last two decades of the eighteenth century also saw the genesis of the primary political divisions of Federalism and Jeffersonian republicanism. It was an era of tremendous intellectual and social ferment and a time during which society expected gentlemen to proffer opinions on all manner of subjects. Walke, born into the Virginia gentry, expected his opinions to matter. His society also demanded of him social engagement in the topics of the day – civic and intellectual participation in the issues that confronted him. As a gentleman, his opinion was important to others, at a time when ideas from all quarters were being vigorously debated.

CHAPTER FOUR

REMARKABLE OCCURRENCES DURING THE UNHAPPY AMERICAN WAR, & A CONCISE & IMPARTIAL ACCOUNT OF THE CAUSES OF ITS ORIGIN & PROGRESS. A PAMPHLET. 1786³⁴

Had every Act of Parliament respecting the internal Government & Taxation of the Colonies been repealed, perhaps that Union & Harmony which so long happy subsisted between Great Britain & the southern Provinces might have been restored. A large Majority of the People were even now anxious for a Reconciliation, but a few who, like Mushrooms sprung up suddenly & had obtained Offices of Dignity, were fond of a System which flattered their Vanity, & as they thought, reflected great Lustre on their Character. It is astonishing to think how timely a vast Majority of Freemen gave up their Opinion at this Period; & it must have proceeded from their being altogether unacquainted with political subjects.-³⁵

Anthony Walke penned his interpretation of the events of the American Revolution in 1786, approximately three years after the Treaty of Paris and the end of hostilities between Great Britain and her American colonies. The significance of this work is that it challenges the notion that the American Revolution was a great bid for liberty and more accurately depicts it as a civil war. It also was written by a member of Virginia's elite class, who approached the material from a non-ideological position and who stood to lose in substantial economic and social terms from the conflict. Walke was clearly a member of that class of Virginia elite who were feeling pressures from a loss of

³⁴Walke detailed many military and social events in his recounting of the American Revolution. For purposes of this analysis, only those portions of the text that have bearing on his political thought are included.

³⁵Walke, *Remarkable Occurrences during the unhappy American War, & a concise & impartial Account of the Causes of its Origin & Progress: a Pamphlet, 1786*, Anthony Walke Papers, 1784-1805, Special Collections, The Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky.

social control. Emory G. Evans posits that by the end of the eighteenth century, Virginia's landed families confronted the diminution of their social and political power and actively sought to consolidate their prominence within society. This challenge to their power had occurred through economic diversification and a population explosion within Virginia. Evans argues that while the elite lost in economic terms, they ultimately retained their class status.³⁶ Nonetheless, the American Revolution gave voice to the deep economic, cultural and social schisms that late eighteenth-century Virginia society comprised. As a member of the Virginia gentry, it was men such as Walke whose position in colonial society was being challenged by the war.

Walke's opening words clearly define the contours of the conflict as he saw them, namely that this conflict had not been a glorious bid for independence on the part of a downtrodden people, but a civil war, fueled on the American side by vainglorious egos. His pamphlet is unique in several respects: it was written in close chronological proximity to the events of the war; it was written in close geographical proximity to military events in Virginia; he had personal access to many of the key political and military figures; it expressed the profound distress and disillusionment that Americans felt about their newly-minted country; and, lastly, it is antithetical to the traditional patriotic iconography of the American Revolution. It may be characterized as sympathetic to the British. Moreover, his term "mushroom gentlemen" in the previous quote suggests his contempt at the social changes wrought by the Revolution, namely the upheavals that allowed men whom he considered to be of a lesser quality to achieve

³⁶Evans, *A Topping People: the Rise and Decline of Virginia's Old Political Elite*, 172.

positions of prominence. This expression that owes its origin to the seventeenth century was a euphemism for unworthy upstarts. Such men disrupted Walke's notions of social hierarchy. Like mushrooms, they sprung up from the dung heap.

Norfolk in the eighteenth century was an active center for shipbuilding and merchant houses, many of which were owned and operated by Scottish merchants. The influx of Scots into the Norfolk area in the first half of the century caused fierce business competition with "native" (i.e. historically British) trading firms. The mutual prejudices of each group set up a cultural antagonism that would eventually be given voice by the Revolution. With few exceptions, at the outbreak of hostilities, most Scots remained Loyalists and left Virginia during the early phases of the conflict or participated on the British side.³⁷ Even though English in origin, the Walke family had been in Virginia for more than a century by the outbreak of the war. Anthony Walke Jr. was probably strongly aligned with these Scottish mercantile houses, as his wife was the member of the commercially prominent McClenahan family. Financial concerns often drove patriot or loyalist sentiment, and these economic motivators were probably the chief factors for Walke's doubts about the value of the Revolution, both before, during, and after the war. In social and economic terms, the few ensuing years immediately after the conclusion of the war were some of the darkest in the country's history. Walke's pamphlet reflects the uncertainty and disillusionment and profound social distress that many Americans felt in the 1780s.

³⁷Adele Hast, *Loyalism in Revolutionary Virginia: The Norfolk Area and the Eastern Shore* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1979), 9.

In order to illustrate the cultural and ideological schism within the colonies in the run-up to the Revolution, it is important to note the fundamental cultural differences between many English in New England and the English in the South. Walke was English in culture, family ties, and aesthetics. He was a part of a greater transatlantic British empire that had substantial ties in the Caribbean, but looked to England for its lead. The roots of the schism in North and South of the colonies, as he explained in his pamphlet, lay in the religious and social sectarianism of seventeenth-century Britain, and southern colonial and New England colonial societies represented opposite ends of that conflict. A large number of Virginia Tidewater ship owners, planters, and merchants, as well as those of coastal South Carolina, had either immigrated or had immediate ancestors who had immigrated from Barbados and other parts of the Caribbean. During the seventeenth century, Barbados was a hotbed of royalist sympathizers seeking refuge and royal protection from the strife of the English Civil War. As Jonathan P. Thomas, Jr. noted in his article, "The Barbadians in Early South Carolina," the civil wars in England in Cromwell's times caused many to take refuge in this island, and the imprisonment and execution of Charles I induced others, many of whom had been officers of rank in the service of the King, to follow their example. In fact, during the first stages of the civil wars, Barbados had been an asylum for both the Royalists and the Parliamentarians, who sought to avoid the contest at home, and emigration to the island was very great."³⁸ Early Chesapeake planters in Virginia had come overwhelmingly out of the social milieu of the

³⁸Jonathan P. Thomas Jr. "The Barbadians in Early South Carolina," *The South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, 31, no. 2, (Apr., 1930): 75-92.

Published by: South Carolina Historical Society

Accessed by: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27569822> on 08/27/2011.

Caribbean that still held significant loyalties to the British crown. They were the men who comprised the early southern American colonial power structure, unlike the largely self-made men, such as Patrick Henry, who populated the western counties of Virginia and carved out the mountain frontiers, or the Puritans and Calvinists who predominated in New England. While the Walke family's origins in England are unknown, given their decades-long presence on Barbados and their slave and shipping interests, it is natural to assume that they might have maintained strong sympathies with the British monarchy. The family does not appear to have been actively involved in the slave trade, either in the Caribbean, or in Virginia,³⁹ although bills of exchange indicate that Jonathan Walke of Barbados, brother to immigrant Thomas Walke, was an agent for the Royal African Company of England on the island, perhaps acting as a financial or transport agent.⁴⁰ If Walke's ties to Scottish merchant houses are taken into account, his vested economic interest in peace, along with the historically pro-British sentiments of the English in coastal Virginia, then his putative loyalist sentiments are understandable. He did not like discord, and this conflict brought tremendous economic and social repercussions to his world.

Loyalism, in terms of the eighteenth-century understanding of it, had many nuanced shades of difference. According to Adele Hast in *Loyalism in Revolutionary*

³⁹“The Transatlantic Slave Trade Database,” Accessed by: <http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/index.faces> on 11/16/2011.

⁴⁰Virginia Colonial Records Project, the Library of Virginia, “African Companies, Accounts, Bills of Exchange. 1691-1693. Received by the Company,” Survey Report No. 05875, Microfilm Reel No. 802. Accessed by: http://va1.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/F/X5RBYLGVJMMYX9GFMCR5M5AM8MIXTFHAFRU3T251N4VV71VEJV-38151?func=full-set-set&set_number=001474&set_entry=000004&format=999 on 11/16/2011.

Virginia: The Norfolk Area and Eastern Shore, many of the area's inhabitants embraced certain political positions for non-ideological reasons. "Thus, the Eastern Shore farmer selling his produce to British naval officers was making a livelihood; his motivation was to help himself, not to harm the cause for independence....On the other hand, individuals of known loyalist views were often unmolested or treated with clemency because of local family and social connections, especially if they had not harmed patriot neighbors or their property...Concerns for community and interpersonal harmony were often more important in determining the treatment of Loyalists than was the nature of loyalist behavior or ideology."⁴¹ Where Anthony Walke, Jr. and his family fell within that spectrum of political behavior is unclear. There is no evidence that he assisted the British or that he was an active patriot, although his father sat on non-importation committees for Princess Anne in the run-up to the war. His ability to resume his life in Princess Anne after the war and occupy social positions in the community is a strong indicator of his lack of active participation in the conflict. Moreover, Reverend Anthony's second wife, after his death, lived at Pleasant Hall, the house where a ball was given after the colonial successes at the Battle of Great Bridge to fete the patriots' victory.⁴² It is highly unlikely that she could have done this had he or his family been active Tory sympathizers. A fair description of Walke's political behavior, like so many other residents of the Norfolk area, is that he attempted to negotiate a safe middle ground between two warring factions;

⁴¹Hast, *Loyalism in Revolutionary Virginia*, 3.

⁴²Survey Report, Pleasant Hall, May 20, 1937, by Daisy Lawrence for the Works Progress Administration, Virginia Historical Inventory, the Library of Virginia.

Accessed by:

http://va1.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/F/7EAUSFBLTQS9361MHT8S1EKHVNSDS3X4JRL4NCYY4E5BQP2BBX-14658?func=full-set-set&set_number=000692&set_entry=000002&format=999 on 11/16/2011.

nonetheless, he held the goals of the Revolution in disdain and thought that the rupture with England brought unhappiness, a persistent concept that appears throughout his writings.

Yet to characterize Walke as a Loyalist is incorrect. Sarah J. Purcell, in *Sealed with Blood: War, Sacrifice, and Memory in Revolutionary America*, after a review of Walke's writings on the American Revolution, incorrectly asserts that "he could not get his pamphlet published even though he publicly espoused optimism that America could go forward, newly united, with Heaven's blessing. Silencing the Loyalists did not guarantee that a united nation could easily be created for real social conflict would remain to test the idealized vision of a unified community of gratitude. The problem was that public memory offered no solution to how Loyalists ought to be treated."⁴³ This is a misrepresentation or misreading of his pamphlet. Nowhere in the pamphlet did Walke discuss his ability or desire to publish it, or his or his family's participation in or treatment after the war. Written after the cessation of hostilities, its publication would have been irrelevant and unnecessary. Being an active Loyalist and a British sympathizer were two different matters altogether. Walke had strong pro-British sympathies; however, a truer description of his politics was that they were an ambiguous mixture of competing sentiments. At the extreme, he was a "closet Tory." His pamphlet was an interpretation of the events that precipitated the war; it was not, as Purcell suggests, a reflection of his own alleged loyalism. Its publication (at least in his environs) would have drawn unwanted attention to him in 1786 and, therefore, the need to publish it was

⁴³Sarah J. Purcell, *Sealed with Blood: War, Sacrifice, and Memory in Revolutionary America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 71.

rendered moot. The more probable explanation for the writing of his pamphlet was that, as a gentleman, he felt compelled to commit his observations to paper for the benefit of posterity. He wanted the truth of the causes of the Revolution (as he interpreted them to be) to be recorded, so that readers would know the war's true origins. Perhaps he felt, as is often the case, that truth and politics become blurred, as time progresses.

Another consideration that assists in establishing the veracity and authority of his account is the sources from which he obtained his information. It is unlikely, given the highly detailed nature of his writing, that he could have gained knowledge from local newspapers, although these were the primary sources for all Virginians of his time. Apart from being in close proximity to the many of the war's events in Norfolk, there is textual evidence that he may have received considerable additional inside information regarding the details of the war from his maternal uncle-by-marriage, Richard Kidder Meade, Washington's *aide de camp*. Meade had served as a captain at the battle at Kempesville, under the command of colonial General John Woodford.⁴⁴ It is also possible that Walke had a more personal acquaintance with and gained information from David Meade, Richard's brother, who in 1774 had purchased a 600-acre estate, Maycox, on the James River from Colonel William Byrd.⁴⁵ As an owner of a James River plantation, David Meade would have had dealings with Norfolk merchants such as Walke. An indication that Walke had a close relationship to the Meade family is that he gave the name Meade as a middle name to his son, David, born in 1800. If Walke had been an active Loyalist

⁴⁴Bishop Meade, *Old Churches, Ministers and Families of Virginia*, 295.

⁴⁵Henry Laurens, *The Papers of Henry Laurens: October 10, 1771- April 19, 1773*, George C. Rogers and David R. Chesnutt eds. (Columbia: South Carolina Historical Society, 1980), 317.

sympathizer, his relationship to key political and military figures after the war, such as Washington and the Meades, would have been highly problematic. The only yet-discovered “loyalist” act of Anthony Walke was to commit his favorable sentiments regarding the British to paper, which he never sought to publish. Interestingly, though, in perhaps an act of supreme political vacillation, Walke testified for the prosecution at the trial of John Bruce. Bruce, an Anglican minister who had run schools for children in Norfolk and the surrounding counties in the 1770s and 1780s, went over to Cornwallis’s forces in early 1781. He was one of two members of the clergy in Virginia indicted for treason to the patriot cause.⁴⁶ As was the case for many Norfolk residents, political behavior and opinion during the American Revolution was often contradictory, depending on the ever-changing pressures that were brought to bear on the citizenry.

In 1786, Walke regretted the outcome of the American Revolution and felt that the colonists had not gained from this “unhappy American war.” He began his written interpretation of the conflict and opened his pamphlet by delineating the sectional schism within the colonies. His first salvo was to place blame on both Great Britain and the colonies. “In all civil Broils both Parties are in Fault. Each has some favourite Object in View which it cannot lose Sight of, & often Things of inestimable Value are sacrificed to obtain what is trifling, if not injurious, in itself.”⁴⁷ After making this initial judgment about the responsibility for the war, he proceeded to identify the source of the rebellion

⁴⁶See footnote in Otto Lorenz, “Clergyman, teacher, and indicted Loyalist: John Bruce of Norfolk and Princess Anne Counties, Virginia,” *The Loyalist Gazette*, March 22, 2003.

Accessed by:

<http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Clergyman%2c+teacher%2c+and+indicted+Loyalist%3a+John+Bruce+of+Norfolk+and...-a0102272999> on 11/16/2011.

⁴⁷Walke, *Remarkable Occurrences during the unhappy American War*.

within the colonies. It was New England and the character of its inhabitants, according to Walke, that lit the flame of the Revolution. “The New-England Colonies had Views of a very different Nature. They were anxious to free themselves entirely from the Dominion of the (?) Sovereign & to become independent States. British Provinces to the Southward had Nothing of this Kind in Contemplation....In Fact they appeared to be rather Auxiliaries than Principals in the War. Those who inhabited New-England were the Men, by whose Means a small Spark was kindled into a Flame, & Fuel was daily supplied, lest it should expire.”⁴⁸ Thus, he asserted that southern colonies had no vested interest in overthrowing British rule, and it was New Englanders were the imprudent hot-heads. His description of the country’s sectional schisms foreshadows those of the American Civil War. At the same time, he also traced a political evolutionary line back to the English Civil War.

He described the discontented lot that inhabited England under the reign of James I, chiefly Puritans and Presbyterians, who sowed discord in the mother country and then transplanted the seeds of discontent into the colonies. As source material, he relied heavily on David Hume’s popular *The History of England from the Invasion of Julius Caesar to the Revolution in 1688*, published in a six volume set between 1754 and 1762. It is possible that this work in Walke’s possession was the same one referred to in the will of Archibald White probated in Norfolk Borough in June of 1763, which left to Walke’s father a book, *A History of England*.⁴⁹ He also cited Abbe Raynal’s *A Philosophical and*

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Elizabeth B. Wingo, *Norfolk County Virginia Will Book 1, 1755-1772* (Norfolk: Published privately, 1986), 88-89. Wingo cites folio 140 of the original.

Political History of the British Settlements and Trade in North America, published in 1776, as a work from which he derived his information.

Characterizing the “misguided Zealots” who stirred up discontent in England and then brought it to America, he opined:

It certainly would have been more equitable & politic in the Government to have granted them greater Indulgences. But after their Resentment was roused, perhaps it might have been happy for Great Britain if the whole had come over to the new Hemisphere: For those who remained made that Country a Scene of Confusion.... Let us...turn our Attention to the Puritans & Presbyterians of New England & we shall find that the same Spirit of Fanaticism which they brought from the Mother Country produced fatal Effects there, & rendered them sometimes extremely unhappy. For a while they lived peaceably without any regular Form of Government, which has been attributed to a rigid Austerity of Manners remarkable in those People.⁵⁰

In short, New Englanders who agitated for the goals of the American Revolution were not patriots fighting for freedom, but malcontents who could not be happy anywhere. Moreover, they formed a society, according to Walke, intolerant and prone to fanaticism, and he characterized the New England colonists as being driven by superstition and immoderation. The ideal of moderation was a key Enlightenment value, and it is a theme to which Walke repeatedly returned in his writings. For Walke, a lack of moderation signified social disorder and produced unhappiness. He wrote, “Persecution which had driven those People to the Western World, soon raged there with it’s (sic) utmost Fury & Violence.”⁵¹ He concluded that “From a Review of their Actions, one may venture to pronounce that they were Enthusiasts in their Principles, discontented & turbulent in their

⁵⁰Walke, *Remarkable Occurrences during the unhappy American War*.

⁵¹Ibid.

Dispositions, always prepared to resist what they deemed Persecution or Oppression, & equally ready to persecute & oppress others...They seemed only to want a Pretext & a favourable Opportunity: & at length these were afforded them by a wrong System of Administration adopted in the Mother Country.”⁵²

The British Stamp Act was the opening that allowed this troublesome lot to vent spleens against the Crown. The repeal of the tax one year after its enactment in 1765 brought even further onerous impositions upon the colonies that accelerated the pace of discontent. After British “Duties on Glass, Paper, Tea, etc.,”⁵³ the inevitable chain of events leading to the Revolution was put in motion by what Walke felt were the misguided actions of the Boston Tea Party.

The Steps taken at Boston were imprudent, riotous & precipitate; truly characteristic of the first Inhabitants of New-England, & a convincing Proof that their Posterity had sucked in the enthusiastic Spirit of their Forefathers. Justice demanded that some Reparation should be made for the Loss which the Owners of the Tea had sustained; altho’ this Act of Violence had been committed to prevent the Payment of a Tax or Duty unconstitutionally laid upon the Colonies. No such Reparation was made.⁵⁴

The behavior of the men at the Tea Party was not noble or patriotic, but rather smacked of hooliganism and the rashness of their forefathers. It is also important to note Walke’s earlier reference to the “Mother Country,” certainly a warm term to express his view of many colonists’ relationship with Britain. Reparations for damaged merchandise were probably an important consideration for him, as well, and he would have

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Ibid.

sympathized with the aggrieved British tea merchants. Because of his own commercial trading activities, it stands to reason that he was keenly sympathetic with ship owners and merchants who sustained heavy losses, as his own family's livelihood depended on such trade. Citing specifically Massachusetts as the fulcrum of revolt, he once again drew a distinction between the culture of New England and the South.

The Inhabitants of this Province, ripe for a Revolt, could not have had more plausible Excuse; but Policy required that their Designs should be concealed: For the other Provinces at that Time were not disposed to dissolve their Union with the Mother Country. They therefore talked of Nothing but their Grievances, & their Complaints daily increased (sic) they called aloud for Redress.⁵⁵

Walke explained the mechanism by which these loud grievances were handled by the colonies, namely that a Congress was convened in Philadelphia from "every Province" and that its composition contained men whose "Characters highly every Point of View; & excepting a few, they were Men of sound Integrity, & unblemished Reputation, from whom much Good was with Reason expected."⁵⁶ Subsequent to this Congress, every colony formed official non-importation committees with the intention of ceasing imports of British goods into the colonies after December 1774, and, depending, upon Parliament's response to the their grievances, ceasing exports after September 10, 1775 to England, Ireland, and the Caribbean. The agreement to which Walke referred is the Declaration of the First Continental Congress, drawn up on October 14, 1774. He neglected to mention the Non-importation Association of Burgesses and Merchants, who as members had voluntarily associated to exercise "moral suasion" on Britain four years

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Ibid.

earlier in June of 1770 and of which his father had been a member. This early body issued a proclamation on the 22nd of that month, prefacing it by their declaration of loyalty to the British crown. “We his Majesty’s most dutiful and loyal subjects of Virginia, declaring our inviolable and unshaken fidelity and attachment to our gracious sovereign, our affection for all our fellow subjects of Great Britain...we...do most solemnly obliged ourselves...to promote the welfare and commercial interests of all those truly worthy merchants, traders, and...inhabitants of this colony...”⁵⁷ The merchants, of whom Walke’s father was one in 1770, still felt that a rapprochement with the king was possible and still thought of themselves as loyal subjects.

Fragmentary evidence exists that may provide an explanation for some of Walke’s more prosaic disdain for the revolutionary cause, apart from his belief that war and conflict equaled unhappiness. The British blockade of the Chesapeake profoundly disrupted the economic activities of Norfolk traders and prevented their merchant activities with England and the Caribbean. These merchants, of whom there were nearly two thousand in Virginia at the outbreak of the war, were primarily located at the port of Norfolk. Walke and his father experienced the immediate economic consequences of a rupture with England, the relationship with which formed the basis of their livelihood. As Isaac Samuel Harrell explained, “A majority of the merchants, despite their Scottish or English birth, desired to remain in the state as neutrals.”⁵⁸ This is evidenced by the declaration of one Scottish merchant, Charles Duncan, who averred that “his purpose in

⁵⁷William J. Van Schreeven and Robert L. Scribner, compiler and editor, *Revolutionary Virginia: the Road to Independence: Vol. I, Forming the Thunderclouds and the First Convention, 1763-1774, A Documentary Record* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1973), 79-80.

⁵⁸Isaac Samuel Harrell, *Loyalism in Virginia: Chapters in the Economic History of the Revolution* (New York: Amis Press, 1965), 75.

the colony was to sell wares, not to meddle in politics.”⁵⁹ The March 23, 1775 edition of the *Virginia Gazette* contains the following letter to Mr. Pinkney the editor to be included in the paper and provides evidence of the Revolution’s effects on the Walke merchant house:

At a committee held at the house of Mr. Loughlin McCabe on Thursday the 2nd day of March 1775, Capt. James Kempe, Capt. William Hancock, and Mr. William Robinson made their return of the sale of the goods lately imported by Anthony Walke of this county, esquire, and by a former committee directed to be sold at public auction, on Saturday the 18th under their direction...Agreeable to a resolve of the committee for the said county, for us the subscribers to sell and dispose of sundry European goods, imported by Anthony Walke, esquire, from Great Britain, since the first day of December and before the first day of February, we have sold and disposed of the said goods, which were purchased by Mr. Walke...⁶⁰

This announcement of the intention to sell Anthony Walke Sr.’s goods suggests that he violated the non-importation agreement and that his goods were confiscated and sold at public auction. If the elder Walke did, indeed, violate the agreement, he got off lightly. His lenient treatment may be explained by the fact that he had significant standing in the community, had been a member in the House of Burgesses for multiple terms, and at least one committee member, James Kempe, served contemporaneously with Anthony Walke Sr. on the Vestry of Lynhaven Parish for many years. Punishment among close associates became a difficult matter with the escalation of ideological

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Virginia Gazette, March 23, 1775. Published by John Pinckney (May 16, 1766 - February 3, 1778), Library of Virginia.

Accessed by:

<http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/VirginiaGazette/VGIssueThumbs.cfm?IssueIDNo=75.Pi.15> on 11/16/2011.

tensions. Nonetheless, what this confirms is that merchants did violate these agreements, because the war had begun to disrupt trade and affect them economically in a profound way. The conclusion that the sale represented a reprimand of Anthony Sr. is further supported by the preceding entry, a letter to the editor, publicizing the proceedings of the Committee at Kempe's Landing against Jonathan Saunders for failing to abide by the terms of the non-importation association. The published statement of the committee noted that "at this important crisis, when the liberties of America are in danger of being subverted, it was thought expedient that he be held up to public censure, and the rather because he hath had the advantage of a liberal education, and for some time past hath studied the law."⁶¹ Saunders in November of that same year, despite his family's long-standing participation in the civic affairs of Princess Anne, joined the Queen's Regiment organized by Lord Dunmore. He eventually fled to Canada, along with other American Loyalists.⁶² Cryptically, one month later, Anthony Walke Sr. published a notice in the *Gazette* that he intended to leave the colony for health reasons within a few months' time and asked that any individual to whom he was indebted come forward to settle accounts.⁶³ The reason for the intended departure is subject to speculation, since the excuse of failing health or seeking treatment elsewhere might allow one to vacate the colony for a time without raising suspicions. He apparently then had a change of heart

⁶¹Ibid. Accessed by:
<http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/VirginiaGazette/VGImagePopup.cfm?ID=4707&Res=HI> on 11/16/2011.

⁶²Hast, *Loyalism in Revolutionary Virginia*, 73.

⁶³Virginia Gazette, December 23, 1775.

Accessed by:
<http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/VirginiaGazette/VGImagePopup.cfm?ID=4652&Res=HI&CFID=12734153&CFTOKEN=48884789> on 11/16/2011.

about departing Virginia and was noted as being present for the meetings of the Lynnhaven Vestry as early as February of the following year.

Walke continued his account of the Revolution by turning to the Battle of Lexington in April of 1775, the tipping point of the war beyond which he saw no possibility of reconciliation between the colonies and England. He believed that southern colonists desired a rapprochement with England, noting that while “A happy Reconciliation was the general Topic, & the ardent Wish of Gentlemen to the Southward...the fatal Blow was struck at Lexington.”⁶⁴ Once again, he placed the blame on what he believed were New England malcontents. After describing the events at Bunker Hill, military engagements in Charleston South Carolina, and colonial General Montgomery’s siege of Montreal, Walke then turned his attention to a confrontation much closer at home, the Battle of Great Bridge at Kempesville, Virginia. His description of the engagement there is significant, because he emphasized the damaging consequences of the war and the destructive behavior of both sides. Moreover, he had a worm’s eye view of the battle: Fairfield, his plantation, was located practically at the confluence of current day Kempesville and Princess Anne Roads. Walke probably witnessed troop movements in the area and had interaction with both patriot and loyalist forces. Importantly, his account challenges the hagiography of the Revolution and the depiction of the revolutionary as the noble fighter for liberty. His description of this battle provides one of the most compelling indictments of the revolutionaries, or “Shirtmen” as they were known. On December 9, 1775 after a skirmish between Loyalists and

⁶⁴Walke, *Remarkable Occurrences during the unhappy American War*.

insurgents near Norfolk, Lord Dunmore sought to reinforce the town, but was met by a group of revolutionaries under the command of Colonel Robert Howe of North Carolina. The ensuing battle occurred at the hastily constructed “Fort Murray” at Great Bridge, otherwise called the “hog pen” by the patriots. Great Bridge Road connected North Carolina with the Norfolk region and was a conduit for transporting supplies necessary to maintain British ships, as well as locally produced commodities for transport to the northern ports.⁶⁵ Walke described Dunmore’s forces’ attempt to repel the colonists “Some newly raised Men, were ordered by his Lordship to sally out & attack them; but the Shirtmen fighting under Cover easily repulsed them, many being wounded, & several killed on the Spot, among whom was the valiant Capt. Fordyce.”⁶⁶ After the British commanders beat a hasty retreat, Dunmore and many loyalist inhabitants of Norfolk sought refuge on ships anchored in the harbor. Norfolk was soon invested by the “Shirtmen,” who took refuge in many of the town’s homes and buildings. Walke described the resulting chaos:

In a few Days the Sailors belonging to one of the Ships were ordered to set Fire to some Houses on the Wharfs, behind which the Shirtmen took Shelter, & frequently fired on those who walked upon the Ship’s Decks. They accomplished their Design, & the Shirtmen, instead of endeavouring to extinguish the Flames, were active in spreading the Fire, til the Town was nearly consumed. The remaining Inhabitants were thrown into the utmost Consternation, finding themselves surrounded by Enemies, & no friendly Arm stretched out to their Assistance. For the Shirtmen who declared that they were come to protect them, not only burned their Houses, but plundered their

⁶⁵Elizabeth Hanbury and Jim Hodges, “The Battle of Great Bridge.”

Accessed by: <http://www.chesapeake.lib.va.us/pdfs/Hanbury-GB-Pamphlet.pdf> on 11/16/2011.

⁶⁶Walke, *Remarkable Occurrences during the unhappy American War*.

Goods; nay so unfortunate were those People that they were robbed by their own Neighbours, who took Advantage of their Distress. Those Shirtmen, who were commanded by Col. Robert H-e from Carolina, exhibited to Mankind, at once, an Instance of Barbarity, Folly & Injustice.⁶⁷

The lawlessness, loss of property and robbery that many colonists and revolutionary militia perpetuated on their fellow citizens in Norfolk engendered tremendous resentment among men such as Walke, who stood much to lose by patriot actions. This general conflagration continued until January 1, 1776, when the town was almost completely destroyed by the joint actions of both Dunmore and the opposition. On August 9, 1792, Reverend Anthony Walke published a notice in the *Virginia Chronicle* that “A Petition is to be presented to the next Assembly for payment for a house burnt in Norfolk Borough in the year 1776 belonging at that time to Anthony Walke, since deceased.”⁶⁸ The specific date of the fire is not listed, but it is possible that this event transpired on February 6, 1776, as revolutionary Colonel Howe evacuated Norfolk under orders of the Virginia Convention and burned the city’s remaining 416 houses. Prior to doing so, he assessed the structures for future reimbursement to their owners.⁶⁹ As an executor of his father’s estate, Walke sought compensation provided by the Virginia Assembly for property losses inflicted by patriot forces in the war.

Walke’s description of the Battle of Great Bridge and the execution of British Major John André provides evidence that Kidder Meade, or his brother David, may have been the source of much of Walke’s military information. Walke pointedly lauded the

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ *Virginia Chronicle & Norfolk & Portsmouth General Advertiser*, (July 20, 1792 - December 19, 1794), August 9, 1792, Library of Virginia.

⁶⁹ Hast, *Loyalism in Revolutionary Virginia*, 59.

courage of British Captain Charles Fordyce, who fell early in a hail of musket fire at Great Bridge, and excoriated Howe and his colonial forces. As Walke commended Fordyce's bravery, so did Kidder Meade, according to his son's recollections. The most compelling proof of a significant relationship between Walke and Meades lies in the comparison of the language of two accounts of the execution of Major John André for treason on October 2, 1780. These descriptions were written almost eighty years apart, one by Walke in 1786, the other by Bishop William Meade in 1857. As is well known, André's trial for espionage accompanied the scandal of the turn-coat General Benedict Arnold, and Richard Kidder Meade oversaw his execution under Washington's orders. Note the language used by Walke and by Bishop William Meade, Kidder Meade's son, to describe the effect of André's death. Walke wrote of the incident:

General Arnold, who commanded at West Point, went on board a British Ship of War, suddenly & afterwards had a Command in the King's Army in America. He had form'd a Design to have all the Troops at West Point, & General Washington himself taken Prisoners, but it proved abortive. Major Andre, Adjutant General of the British Army was sent to West Point to consult about Measures to be adopted, but leaving that Place, his Curiosity led him to learn something farther of the American Army, & he was taken near General Washington's Camp, with Papers in his Boots which unfolded the Plan formed by General Arnold & himself. Of course, Arnold was obliged to fly precipitately, & Maj. Andre was tried as a Spy & executed. We cannot forbear to pay the Tribute of a Sigh, when we reflect that a Man of such Character & such Abilities met with so unhappy an End.⁷⁰

Likewise, Bishop William Meade writing of his father's recollection of the execution recalled his father's reaction to the event. "He was with Washington in all the

⁷⁰Ibid.

great battles of the Revolution. To him was committed the superintendence of the execution of Major André, of which he always spoke with much feeling, saying that he could not forbear tears at seeing the execution of so uncommon and interesting a man, although he entirely approved of the order.”⁷¹ The similarity of the language used to describe Andre’s execution strongly suggests that Richard Kidder Meade may have been Walke’s source for some of his material.

After his description of the violent destruction of Norfolk, Walke continued his chronicling of the major military actions up to the Declaration of Independence, wryly observing that, “With how much Consistency this Step was taken, considering their former Professions, & the Language of their Petition in August 1775, or with what Wisdom & Policy, considering America’s Infant State, I will not determine.” He mentioned in his footnote to this statement that “Congress had not now the same Members, of which it was first composed. That Body had degenerated.”⁷² Clearly, he doubted the prudence of independence or the intentions of the overly ambitious men who populated Congress, his “mushroom gentlemen.” He described the arrival of Lord Howe from Britain with a large contingent of troops subsequent to the Declaration of Independence. Howe and his brother had been “impowered (sic) to offer Terms of Peace to America.” After being fired upon by American forces, Walke proffered that Howe “now appeared to have a real Inclination to employ the Powers with which he was vested, jointly with the General, to the laudable Purpose of restoring Peace & Harmony in the

⁷¹Bishop Meade, *Old Churches, Ministers and Families of Virginia*, 295.

⁷²Walke, *Remarkable Occurrences during the unhappy American War*.

British Empire, But his Design proved abortive.”⁷³ Walke continued to view the restoration of peace and harmony with Britain as the desirable outcome of the conflict, noting that Lord Howe and British General Sullivan attempted to arrange for peace negotiations that never came to fruition. Congress, according to Walke, sent three delegates to treat with Howe: Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and Edward Rutledge, and they responded to the British general’s attempts at negotiation in the following manner:

The Members of Congress giving him to understand that a Return to the Domination of Great Britain was not now to be expected, that the Declaration of Independence had been called for by the People of the Colonies in general & afterwards universally approved of”, his Lordship put an End to the Conference, & said “that he was sorry to find that no Accommodation was like to take Grief of many good men, who knew that the People had never been consulted with Regard to the Declaration of Independence, a majority of whom were averse to it; and who thought that the Offers made by Great Britain, & the Matter contained in Lord Howe’s Message formed a good Basis for an happy and honourable Peace.”⁷⁴

Walke added his own editorial comment, by noting that “America had no Money to carry on War, or support the Government, but Paper Bills of Credit & those were issued from the continental Treasury, & the Treasuries of every Province, to a vast Amount. At first they were equal to Gold & Silver, but they soon decreased in Value so much that they were not esteemed by the People. There were several Causes for this Depreciation, but it was chiefly owing to the great Number in Circulation, many of which

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Ibid.

were counterfeit, & to the Want of Specie to redeem them.”⁷⁵ This was certainly true in 1776 and even truer in 1786. His pamphlet reflected the dark economic times and rampant inflation that began during the Revolution and continued unabated into the 1780s. For Walke, the war had been a ruinous enterprise, lacking in common sense, and one that produced only unhappiness and conferred no real benefits to Americans.

Walke’s first half-hearted praise for the efforts of the American forces came when he commended Washington’s skillful retreat from British forces in New Jersey, a feat the general exercised with great “Caution and Prudence.”⁷⁶ Walke, arguing that the South was not of one mind on the question of independence, proceeded to describe the devolution of the conflict in the South into a civil war, and he drew a contrast with New England, which he believed to be uniform in revolutionary sentiment. He noted that there still did remain a few good men of character, of whom surely he considered himself.

It is to be observed that the Diversity of Sentiment, which had uniformly reigned in the Provinces south of New-England, often occasioned Unhappiness among the People, & sometimes broke into the wildest Excesses of Rage. When their Jealousies & Suspicions were excited against an unfortunate Individual, he was insulted by the Populace, under some enthusiastic Leader, & covered with Tar & Feathers was carried about in Triumph; a Triumph which reflected Ignominy on the cowardly Victors, & called for Compassion on the friendless Victim: I say friendless, because no one, however desirous, dared to assume that Character, or speak a Word in his Behalf. This Practice of persecuting those, whom they could not convince, first began in New-England; for even there Men were to be found, who disapproved the intended Change in the Government. And after a League was formed, the other

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Ibid.

Provinces gradually caught that Spirit of Fanaticism so very remarkable in New-England.⁷⁷

Once again, he returned to the idea of the New England zealot, whose persecuting nature infected other colonial subjects who would otherwise not be disposed to such behavior. The civilian-on-civilian violence was particularly acute around Norfolk, where Whigs and Tories clashed more frequently than other parts of Virginia, and throughout the waning years of the war, according to Adele Hast, the Revolution in Norfolk, Princess Anne, and Nansemond, Counties was between civilians.⁷⁸

One of the most interesting observations contained in the pamphlet is Walke's explanation for the mass expulsion of "Loyalists" in 1777. Hast contends that the largest removal of Loyalists from the Norfolk area came that year, as Virginia expelled "Britons unfriendly to the American cause."⁷⁹ According to Walke's account, the motive for the expulsion had selfish economic considerations at its root; he felt that these British merchants, factors, and clerks were banished from the colony because many Virginians owed money to them and saw this as an easy means of liquidating their debts. He added in his footnotes that not all members of Virginia's Assembly were motivated by bad intentions, but may have been responding to the frenzied hue and cry of the public desire for the banishment:

It may appear difficult to Such as are unacquainted with the State of Virginia at this Period, to assign a Reason for this Measure. Those People were in general averse to the Revolution designed, but no Danger, was to be apprehended, as they made no Opposition, but by Words

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Hast, *Loyalism in Revolutionary Virginia*, 111.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 179.

were trifling in Comparison to the rest of the Community and not skilled in the Use of Arms. The Truth is many of the Colonists owed large Sums of Money to Merchants in England, & those Factors were the Collectors of the Debts.⁸⁰

Walke returned to chronicling of military events, leading up to the surrender of British General Burgoyne at Saratoga, noting that some Americans were elated by his capitulation. He followed by asserting that “Those Americans, who wished for an independent Government, were much elated on General Burgoyne’s Capitulation. They had long been solicitting (sic) foreign Assistance, & on the 6th Day of February 1778 a Treaty of Amity & Commerce was concluded between the King of France, & the united States of America, as well as a Treaty of Alliance eventual & defensive.” It is important to note the use of his language, “Those Americans who wished for an independent Government,” implying that not all did. Walke imputed bad motives to the French desire to render Americans aid, observing that “This Conduct of the French proceeded as much from that inveterate Enmity, which had ever subsisted between them & their English Neighbours, as from the Prospect of any Advantage to be derived from the Connection. They thought it a favourable Opportunity to retaliate on those from whom they had received so many Mortifications.”⁸¹ Much later during the French Revolution, many revolutionaries blamed Louis and Marie and their enormous hatred for the English for the onerous taxes with which French subjects were saddled, in order to support the American Revolution.

⁸⁰Walke, *Remarkable Occurrences during the unhappy American War*.

⁸¹Ibid.

Walke then described Lord North's speech on Parliament on February 17, 1778, quoting the Prime Minister and then noting that "An Act of Parliament then was passed to enable his Majesty to appoint Commissioners to treat with such Assemblies, or with such Person or Persons, as they should think proper, concerning any Grievances existing, or supposed to exist in any of the Colonies..."⁸² In June of that same year, Parliament, according to Walke, commissioned several emissaries to go to Philadelphia to effect terms of peace, along with Lord Viscount Howe and his brother Sir William, who were still present in the colonies. This peace commission then sent a letter to the Continental Congress offering to recognize the legislatures of each state, establish revenue and regulatory mechanisms, and "to exercise a perfect Freedom of Legislation & internal Government, so that the British States throughout North America, acting with us in Peace & War under one common Sovereign...we cannot help taking Notice of the insidious Interposition of a Power (France), which has, from the first Settlement of these Colonies, been actuated with Enmity to us both."⁸³ Congress responded on June 17th with a letter from which Walke excerpted the following:

Nothing but an earnest Desire to spare the farther Effusion of Blood would have induced Congress to read a Paper containing Expressions so disrespectful to his most Christian Majesty (Louis XVI).-The Acts of the British Parliament, the Commission from your Sovereign, & your Letter suppose the People of these States to be Subjects of the Crown of Great Britain, & are founded on the Idea of Dependence, which is utterly inadmissible.⁸⁴

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Ibid.

Walke observed that such a reply from Congress was predictable, given the colonies' leaders had already made up their minds on the question of independence the previous year and "and having lately pledged their Faith, were now totally devoted to France."⁸⁵ In his footnotes, Walke paraphrased Governor Samuel Johnston who remarked that when "Motives of private Ambition could so far sully the Principles upon which their first Resistance was made as to bow to a French Ambassador, & league with the ancient enemy of both Countries, he was not anxious about the good Opinion of such a Body."⁸⁶ Walke, by paraphrasing Johnston, returned again to the theme of unprincipled men of private ambitions -- "mushroom gentlemen" -- men who, lacking political insight, used the Revolution as a means of social advancement. This reference to Johnston provides a clue to the length of time it took Walke to write his pamphlet. He referred to Johnston as "Governor"; however, Johnston was not elected Governor of North Carolina until December of 1787, the year after the pamphlet is dated, suggesting that the work of writing the pamphlet began in 1786 and spilled over into the following year and took possibly longer.

After noting that the peace commission was for naught, Walke blamed the Continental Congress's intransigence on the French Alliance, suggesting that it "had precluded every Thing which looked like Reconciliation."⁸⁷ The Commissioners then attempted to bypass Congress by appealing directly to the colonists with a Manifesto, "the Style of which was really sublime. The Language was that of one Part of a great

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷Ibid.

Empire to the other; persuasive, affectionate, & every way adapted to the Purpose.”⁸⁸

When emissaries of the Crown attempted to bring the Manifesto into Virginia under a flag of truce, they were ordered to leave immediately and deemed enemies, according to Walke. Again, the expression “one Part of a great Empire to the other, persuasive, affectionate,” offers further textual evidence of his belief in the relatively benign and noble aspect of the British crown.

Some factual errors appear throughout Walke’s text. He misdated the following event as having occurred in 1776 when it actually took place in 1778. He recounted that three members of the Continental Congress had indicated to Lord Howe that independence was sought by all American colonists. In one of Walke’s most forceful statements to the contrary, he opined that if public sentiment had been uniform throughout the colonies, then no harm would have come from the circulation of the commissioners’ Manifesto:

If it was so, why should they be averse to the free Circulation of the Manifesto through the Provinces? They were apprehensive of Consequences disagreeable to themselves, if their Conduct should be placed in a clear Light before the People. It had hitherto been represented to them under a thick Cloud of Prejudice & Falsehood. In the southern Provinces too the Resentment of the People which had been excited against the Mother Country began to subside, & the Voice of Reason to be heard. As at first, so now there was a large Majority of moderate Men; but in New-England only a small Proportion of them was to be found. Every where (sic) else the major Part grew tired of their Sufferings, encreasing (sic) daily by the Destruction of their Trade, and sincerely wished for a Change in their Affairs...now they (the British) began to turn their Attention to the southern Parts of America; as by this

⁸⁸Ibid.

Means they would divide her Force, & embarrass her Councils. Accordingly General Provost made a sudden Incursion into Georgia from St. Augustine, & threw the whole Country into Confusion, being quite unprepared to repel even the small Body of Men.⁸⁹

Once again southern colonies heard the “Voice of Reason,” This statement encapsulates Walke’s feelings about the Revolution: it was the lack of reason that brought about this rupture. He then instructed the reader to remember how less developed the South was in defenses and infrastructure, noting that Georgia offered little resistance to British army incursions there and observing that “their military Strength is trifling” in comparison to the northern colonies.⁹⁰ He described that “those Provinces abound in Slaves more than white Inhabitants” and that the English found willing recruits in the South at every turn. At this juncture he criticized the British practice of offering freedom to runaway slaves if they would serve as soldiers of the crown.

It was usual in their southern Expeditions, for the Negro Slaves to leave their Masters, & fly to the English. Most of those unfortunate People adopted that Plan from a flattering Persuasion that they might obtain Freedom: - And some perhaps to avoid the Rigour & Severity of a relentless Tyrant.⁹¹

This is the first instance in Walke’s writings of his equation of slavery with tyranny, a theme he will return to in his essay written seven years later, “Short Remarks on Slavery & the Treatment of Negroes – 1793.” Once southern slaves had fled to British lines repatriation to their masters upon the conclusion of the war rarely occurred. In 1783, Thomas Walke III, Reverend Anthony’s cousin, lamented, in an open letter to the

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹Ibid.

Virginia delegates in Congress, his and other Virginians' inability to recover slaves captured and being held by the British. He noted that "I along with a number of others, have been to New-York; in order to reclaim our slaves that were wrested from us by the British enemy (sic)...but contrary to our expectations, the event has proved the reverse...that no slaves were to be given up."⁹²

Walke then turned his attention to the matter of colonial and British attempts to draw Indian tribes into the conflict, noting, "During this unhappy Contest both Sides endeavoured to interest the Indian Tribes in their Favour, whenever an Opportunity offered."⁹³ Later he described Washington's ordered attack on the Five Nations on the western New York frontier:

Tribes fought under her (Britain's) Banner; besides a large Number of Americans who were actuated either by Motives of Loyalty or a Spirit of Resentment. General Washington had been obliged this Year to send a Detachment against the Indians on the western Frontier of New York Province; & on the 30th of Sept. General Sullivan, by a Letter informed the Congress that he had destroyed 40 Towns belonging to the Five Nations, & all the Corn & Houses, as he marched. The Corn was growing in the Fields & would have produced about 160.000 Bushels. He also laid waste to their Orchards, leaving no Fruit Tree behind him. The Indians made some Resistance, but in vain. Considering by whom this unhappy People had been deprived of the greatest Part of their Country, we cannot be surprised at their Readiness to invade the Provinces. But whether this Expedition was according to the Principles of Humanity, let those Men determine, who have, upon every Occasion during the present Dispute, called the British Nation savage.⁹⁴

⁹²"Letter of Thomas Walke to the Virginia Delegates," May 3, 1783 in James Madison, *The Papers: 6 April 1791 - 16 March 1793, Volume 14* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 5.

⁹³Walke, *Remarkable Occurrences during the unhappy American War*.

⁹⁴*Ibid.*

Like the slaves whose masters he called Tyrants, Indians for Walke were an “unhappy people” who had been deprived of their lands and by definition their liberty. He used the example of patriot treatment of the Indians to draw the distinction with that of the British. Walke was condemning Sullivan’s actions and, by implication, the order of Washington to attack the settlements, suggesting that it was the patriots, not the British, who were truly “savage.” Later, writing to the *Virginia Chronicle*, Walke, using the pseudonym “Fabius,” penned a very different characterization of Washington, exhorting his readers to “follow the Example of our illustrious Fellow-Citizen, the President of the United States, who stands sublime upon an Eminence & calmly studies the Happiness of Millions who are cultivating the Fields around him.”⁹⁵ Clearly, with the Revolution over, Walke followed the public wave of support and enthusiasm for Washington, even though he had a very different assessment of patriot actions in 1786.

The economic conditions of the war garnered much attention from Walke, and he described the economic distress that the inhabitants experienced. Addressing the colonies’ dire economic conditions, he wrote:

Not only here, but through the whole Continent, the wise & prudent were every Day more convinced of the ruinous Tendency of those Measures which Congress had adopted, & they were alas! doomed to support. The Paper Money was every where (sic) held in the utmost Contempt by all Ranks of Men, & the Rulers who took their Salaries in Commodities, while the Debts due to the People from each Province were discharged in Paper. Rum sold by Retail this Year as high as forty eight Pounds p. Gallon, & other Articles in Proportion. The Quantity legally emitted & the counterfeit undiscovered exceeded all Bounds, & it was impossible to draw it out of Circulation. The Congress had

⁹⁵Walke, “An Essay,” *A Miscellany*, June 1794.

no Resource but Tobacco & other Commodities to carry on the War, & their Credit was at a low Ebb.⁹⁶

Prior to independence, the colonies had adopted a domestic paper currency with much success, since gold and silver were usually used to pay for British commodities and were in short supply to support domestic trading activities. As E. James Ferguson has remarked, “the inflation of the Revolution destroyed that confidence, at least among propertied men, for they believed that paper money could never be a reliable instrument in an era when the whims of the people dictated, as they said, the policy of the government.”⁹⁷ Walke’s assessment reflected the gloomy mood of the country.

The late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries produced a spate of retrospectives on the causes and events of the Revolution; one of them was Samuel Farmer Wilson’s *A History of the American Revolution with a Preliminary View of the Character and Principles of the Colonists*, published in 1834. Wilson echoed Walke’s assessment of the abysmal economic conditions of the United States during the Revolution.

The absurd measures for regulating prices by law were continued and urged by the Congress on the States with renewed pertinacity, after their bad effects were demonstrated by experience; and, it is painful to add, that large numbers of men of influence, including members of Congress, disgraced themselves by employing these for purposes of speculation and private gain. The national treasury was empty....Two hundred millions of paper

⁹⁶Walke, *Remarkable Occurrences during the unhappy American War*.

⁹⁷James E. Ferguson, “Currency Finance: An Interpretation of Colonial Monetary Practices,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 10, no. 2 (Apr., 1953), 167.

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money were in circulation, and no means provided for redemption, and no prospect for the future.⁹⁸

Both men's conclusions were that the dark days were upon the colonists because public virtue, a concept connected with that of private morality, was, according to his view, at a low point. Walke proffered "Indeed Fraud both public & private seemed to be the characteristick (sic) of America at this Period; but few Men amidst a Land of Corruption still preserved their Integrity. Commerce drooped, & Religion could hardly be said to exist. The Church of England though established by our Ancestors, & sanctified by Time was no longer supported by the Law in Virginia, and Dissenters were encouraged."⁹⁹ While he lamented the demise of the Anglican Church, within a few short years, he would do a *volte-face* and become one the American Episcopal Church's first ordained ministers. He described the fate of many Loyalists, whose estates were confiscated and the proceeds of which were "applied to public Uses."¹⁰⁰ After recounting British depredations on the coast of Virginia, he cited the ineffective nature of the Virginia militia, and "a very trifling Body moved from Place to Place under the Marquis La Fayette, a young French Gentleman of Enterprise & Activity."¹⁰¹

One Englishman he held out for particular censure was the notorious Colonel Banastre Tarleton, the only example of such opprobrium towards a British military figure in his pamphlet. Calling him "incautious" and "cruel," he observed that "Tarleton was in

⁹⁸Samuel Farmer Wilson, *A History of the American Revolution with a Preliminary View of the Character and Principles of the Colonists* (Baltimore: Cushing & Sons, et. al., 1834), 288.

⁹⁹Walke, *Remarkable Occurrences during the unhappy American War*.

¹⁰⁰*Ibid.*

¹⁰¹*Ibid.*

great Esteem with Lord Cornwallis for his Activity in North Carolina.”¹⁰² Walke noted that Tarleton had taken a party of soldiers as high as the head waters of the James River and, by necessity, the Virginia Assembly had to flee from Charlottesville and take refuge behind the mountains.

The active Men in Virginia now wore a Countenance of Despair, & hoped for a Termination of their Distress, when they were transported by the News of a French Fleet arrived in Chesepeak (sic) Bay.” The French fleet’s arrival marked a turning point for the revolutionaries’ fortunes. Walke, in a rare display of approval for events favorable to colonial exertions, observed that “a Week afterward the French Fleet anchored in the Chesepeak (sic) in Triumph & exhibitted (sic) the grandest Appearance of this Nature, which was ever known, in the Country.”¹⁰³

After describing the arrival of the French fleet, Walke shifted the tone of his narrative, switching from a chronology of military events to a retrospective analysis of British and American motives. The British, according to Walke, were poised to restore control in the colonies, having reasserted it in the South. The entry of the French into the Chesapeake at Yorktown turned the tide and reversed British successes. In one of the most significant passages in the pamphlet he reflected on the results of the war. How much better it would have been to Walke had the colonies dropped quietly like fruit from the tree, ripe and mature:

The English were, but a few Weeks before the Capture of York, in the Meridian of Prosperity & Glory, wielding the Sword of Conquest over the Southern States...But the French gained an Ascendancy at War, and, in a Moment, the Clouds of Adversity & Despair lowered around them...Dejection reigned on one Side. Ecstasy on the other...The

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³Ibid.

Citizens of America enjoyed a Relaxation of Misery, & began to meditate on future Scenes of Tranquility. England too reflected on her past Folly, & found that She had absurdly lavished Blood & Treasure to obtain what would have been of no Advantage to her-an unbounded Power over the Colonies. And the Leaders of America rejoiced not that the Americans had gained Liberty, but that their own Ambition was almost gratified. For, in Truth, England had never exercised Tyranny, but wished to establish her Power in America, and to levy Taxes by Act of Parliament, by which Means Tyranny might at some Period have been exercised; and before the Attempt of Taxation the Americans had been as free & happy as any People upon Earth...But how much better would it have been had America, at a Period of Maturity, quietly fallen from here, as the ripe Apple from the Tree, & had the rising States, like young & tender Scions, found Shelter under her Branches?¹⁰⁴

This passage is significant, because he borrowed an analogy that had originally been used by Jacques Turgot, a French physiocrat and social theorist, who served as Louis XVI's naval minister and comptroller general of France. In 1750, Turgot delivered a speech to the Sorbonne in which he characterized the relationship between parent countries and colonies, and he made a prescient observation about America's future. Speaking of Carthage's independence from Phoenicia, he remarked that "colonies are like fruits, which hold to the tree only until their maturity; the colonies having become sufficient to themselves, will do as Carthage did, and as, someday, America will do."¹⁰⁵ As a man of letters, Walke was reading not only extant British literature, but clearly was grounded in French sources, as well. Familiarity with the literature and language of Turgot provides textual evidence of the scope of his exposure to ideas in vogue in the

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

¹⁰⁵W. Walker Stephens, *The Life and Writings of Turgot, Comptroller General of France, 1774-1776* (London and New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1895), 165.

latter half of the eighteenth century. Walke concluded in the foregoing statement that the Revolution had not secured liberty for the colonists, but had gratified the egos of a few ambitious men. Britain was zealous in her enforcement of a few misguided policies, but she was not an oppressive tyrant.

Appearing to refer to himself as “an accurate & nice Observer, who is equally free from Partiality,” (if, indeed, Walke was thinking of himself, this was the farthest from the truth), he enjoined the reader to reflect on the bad behavior on both sides.¹⁰⁶ Ironically, throughout most of his pamphlet, he ascribed bad behavior to the revolutionaries and did not apportion to the same degree to the British. Walke offered the following assessment:

When we take a View of this grand and important Contest we must observe that the Motives which seem'd to actuate the principal Characters on both Sides were not generally such (illegible) highest Honour to human Nature. However, Exceptions may be discovered by an accurate & nice Observer, who is equally free from Partiality & Misanthropy; who is neither solicitous of Praise, nor awed by public Censure. And where the Scene fills us with Horror, it is to no Purpose to lament.¹⁰⁷

At this juncture, his mood became sanguine, as he speculated on the possibilities for the new country, if its leaders counseled the Votaries of Wisdom, Religion, and Justice:

When we look forward, & contemplate what Prospects are to open upon us, we cannot but anticipate the most striking & beautiful Improvements in the new Empire, provided Wisdom, Religion, & Justice, shall be properly guarded, and attended to.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶Walke, *Remarkable Occurrences during the unhappy American War*.

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

Wisdom was the quality that Walke hoped the country's new leaders would embrace; otherwise, a "Train of Evils" would prevail. Fundamental to this prediction was his belief that religion undergirded civic values. Justice and religion were co-equal in his mind, to support sound public policy. He exhorted America's legislative bodies to take these thoughts into consideration, as they implemented governmental practices, otherwise "a Train of Evils, her constant Associations, shall infest & ruin the Land."¹⁰⁹ He cautioned that legislators would be wise to look to Wisdom, Religion and Justice as their guiding principles.¹¹⁰

He concluded his pamphlet by sounding a cautiously optimistic note for the future of America:

Let then every true Patriot who wishes for the Welfare & Prosperity of America, endeavour to promote her essential Interests, by countenancing the Votaries of Wisdom, Religion, & Justice, & by aiding them in every laudable Design; Let the laws be salutary, & the Execution thereof steady & impartial-that Vice may fly to other Regions; that the united States may enjoy all the Blessings of Peace and their Union may be as lasting...¹¹¹

An analysis of Walke's pamphlet reveals several important points. First, it demonstrates the profound ambiguities with which colonists wrestled as the conflict began to impact their daily lives. It is also a sound confirmation that economics and personal interests had strong influences on determining ideological positions; moreover, reaction to those politics was militated against by one's standing in the community and personal ties, as evidenced by Walke's father's light treatment for his probable breaking

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

¹¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹¹Ibid.

of the non-importation association ban. Most importantly, Walke's doubts about the goals of the American Revolution and his implied professed admiration for the British suggests that many in the 1780s still felt deeply conflicted about their identities. As a British subject born in the 1750s, Walke could not conceive of a break with England within this new emerging national movement. His later political roles at the Virginia constitutional convention and the first presidential election demonstrate his ability, like so many other men, to adapt to political circumstances as they evolve. Economic conditions had also improved appreciably by the 1790s, and his civic participation is also likely a reflection of the renewed optimism Americans felt for their country's future.

Walke's belief that good government arises from a society's embrace of religion may explain his decision to enter the clergy, a position he held without remuneration for his entire tenure in Lynnhaven Parish. His ordination in 1788 interestingly coincided at the very time that the federal Constitution was being ratified by the states. His conviction that a civil society could not exist in the absence of a strong religious foundation probably was one motivation for his decision to embark on a ministerial career. Concomitantly, the eighteenth-century gentry's emphasis on public service in order to promote the higher good likely compelled him to pursue the second path for which he was recognized: a career as a representative from Princess Anne County in the federal constitutional debates and later at the first presidential election. For Walke, if he were truly to live up to the ideal of an eighteenth-century gentleman, then he had to translate his personal values into action. In the case of his inherent belief in the value of religion

and public service, he was able to accomplish this, an exercise he could not do later on the question of the abolition of slavery.

CHAPTER FIVE

WALKE'S WRITINGS IN THE *VIRGINIA CHRONICLE* IN RESPONSE TO NORFOLK REACTIONS TO THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

*EPITAPH-On the late Spanish King.
Here lies a glorious King of Spain
Whose praises every poet pipes,
Renown'd for many a pig campaign,
and dealing death among the snipes:-
Yet laugh not living Kings I pray,
Because his planets so beswin'd him,
The King of Spain, I dare to say,
Leaves many a fool, with crowns behind him.*

Thus stands the list-England's defective in garret-furniture;-France's a pot-bellied automaton-a vox et praeterea nihil;-Denmark's an o;-Sweden's a boy;-Russia's Empress, 'fairly done over;-Bohemia and Hungary's led by the nose like another bear;-Holland's a rareeshow;-Portugal's Queen, crazy as a coot;-Prussia's second Quixotte (sic), engaging with every windmill he meets with:-Naple's a mere balloon in politics, but in private life a really clever fellow:-and Spain's a devotee at the shrines of Bacchus and Venus...¹¹²

The foregoing poem by Peter Pindar, with an editorial appendage, appeared in the September 9, 1792 edition of the *Virginia Chronicle & Norfolk & Portsmouth General Advertiser*, and its sentiment regarding Europe's kings and queens did not bode well for continental monarchies. The poetry of Pindar (pseudonym for British political satirist John Wolcot) appeared on a regular basis in the *Chronicle*, and often directed its mordant observations at politics of the day. Editorial comment was often anonymous, but

¹¹²"Epitaph on the late Spanish King," *Virginia Chronicle & Norfolk & Portsmouth General Advertiser*, September 9, 1792.

presumably by the hand of Messrs. Daniel Baxter and Thomas Wilson, publishers of the newspaper.

The extant copies of the *Chronicle* begin on July 20, 1792 and end on December 19, 1794. Interestingly, many of the issues of the *Chronicle* housed at the Library of Virginia have the name “St. George Tucker” inscribed across their tops, indicating that these were Tucker’s personal copies. This two-year period coincided with some of the most active periods of the French Revolution, and the political turmoil in France was an object of great attention and interest in the Virginia press. The *Chronicle* served the Tidewater region, primarily the area of the Boroughs of Norfolk (the second largest city in Virginia behind Richmond and the twentieth largest American city as of 1790¹¹³) and Portsmouth, as well as adjacent Princess Anne, Suffolk, Hampton, Chesapeake, and Nansemond counties. The newspaper clearly evinced early, positive public opinion towards the French; however, the glowing endorsements faded over time, as the grim realities of the Revolution set in. Beginning with ebullience and enthusiasm in the early stages of the Revolution, the public’s views morphed into those of horror and outrage at the unfolding events, not only the death of Louis XVI, but the excesses of Jacobin control of French government.

During the aforementioned period for which copies of the *Chronicle* survive, correspondents wrote into the newspaper to air their opinions regarding the demise of Louis XVI and the nature of the Gallic revolution. Although disguising their identities with pseudo-Latin *noms de plume*, they were, most assuredly, members of middle- or

¹¹³“Population of the 24 Urban Places: 1790,” United States Bureau of the Census. Accessed by: <http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0027/tab02.txt> on 11/16/2011.

upper-class literate Tidewater society, almost certainly male, and probably known to one another. Through this exchange in the paper, the ideological tensions regarding the American and French revolutions, and their relationship to one another, played out. One of these correspondents was Reverend Anthony Walke. Though disturbed by the bloodshed as the Revolution unfolded, his positions were very much in keeping with the general consensus expressed in the Virginia press.

His identity as author of some of these opinion pieces has been verified by comparing writings found in his personal essay books that are housed at the Filson Historical Society in Louisville with columns published in the *Chronicle*. Thus, as he admitted authorship of these essays in a preface to his writings, his authorship of the opinion pieces that appeared in the *Chronicle* is also established. Walke used different pseudonyms depending on the subject that was featured in the newspaper; however, in the debate that ensued that spring regarding the Revolution, his assumed identity was “Philanthropos.” He may have wished to provide a subtle hint as to his identity by choosing a Greek, rather than Latin, pseudonym. While Latin was a standard language of study for men of education in the eighteenth century, Greek remained almost the exclusive purview of those trained in seminary and theological studies. During the period in which he was most active, he remained the Episcopal minister of Lynnhaven Parish (a position that he resigned in 1800 and resumed in 1812 for a period of one year).¹¹⁴ It is likely that this position probably precluded him from disclosing his identity, as he waded

¹¹⁴Old Donation Church Website.

from religious into secular political affairs; a more prosaic explanation is that it also simply was the fashion of the day to adopt an assumed identity.

Beginning in the fall of 1792, editorial pieces by anonymous correspondents began to make their way into the *Chronicle*, commenting on the French condition and the fate of the king. Unfortunately for posterity, some editions are lost to time, and, consequently, existing editions of the paper are not always sequential, making the thread of the debate problematic to follow. Tidewater Virginians, apart from a keen political curiosity, also had a tremendous investment in the affairs of France. Norfolk had a Vice-Consul for France, who administered matters concerning French citizens within the borough environs, as well as dealt with shipping concerns coming from the continent. The port city did a lively trade with French ships, and it was not uncommon to find in the *Chronicle* advertisements announcing the arrival or departure of commercial ships headed for Bordeaux, in particular. A typical ad read:

The Brigantine
Le Bailly
De SUFFREN, Master

A French built Vessel, newly sheathed and in good order, burthen about 400 hhds¹¹⁵ will take in freight for BORDEAUX, in France, about 300 hhds to complete her cargo, and will be in order for receiving that part of her load in 5 to 6 weeks from this date. For terms apply to the VICE CONSUL of France, in Norfolk¹¹⁶

While the Vice-Consul regulated commercial affairs in Norfolk, the primary Consul, Messr. J.H. Fauchet, resided in Philadelphia and was the ultimate authority on

¹¹⁵ “hhd” denotes hogshead, which is equivalent to fourteen gallons in the English imperial measurement system.

¹¹⁶ Virginia Chronicle & Norfolk & Portsmouth General Advertiser, September 22, 1792.

French matters within the United States. The Vice-Consul during the 1790s was Moses Myers, the first Jewish merchant to settle in Norfolk, whose 1792 federal-style brick townhouse exists to this day.¹¹⁷

By the summer of 1792, substantial portions of newspaper were devoted to coverage of the affairs in France, reprinting the French constitution *in toto*, as well as commentary on the events surrounding the king, the Legislative Assembly, and the possibility of an impending trial for Louis. Beginning in August, and continuing into the fall, the depictions of the French Revolution were very favorable. A typical sentiment was expressed in the August 18th edition, exhorting its readers to remember their bonds of duty to France:

It is with pleasure, we observe, in perusing some late European papers, that patriotic collections are making in many towns, in England, Scotland, and Ireland, to assist the French in their war against the tyrants of Austria, Prussia, &c.....To Americans who have experienced the friendship of their faithful allies-who have seen the blood and treasure of France, freely expended to emancipate them from tyranny-to establish their independence, and to secure to them the favor of the nations of the earth-the injunction "Do thou likewise," must apply home to every feeling heart, by recording this event-that on the altar of freedom a sacrifice has been made, acceptable to Heaven-and honorary to the freemen who made it.¹¹⁸

As France embarked on its revolutionary wars with the rest of Europe, Virginia newspapers sang the praises of Lafayette and the French army, noting Lafayette's "indefatigable exertions" and "a spirit replete with enthusiasm for the welfare and final

¹¹⁷"The Myers Family," The Chrysler Museum of Art.

Accessed by: <http://www.chrysler.org/about-the-museum/historic-houses/the-moses-myers-house/the-myers-family/> on 11/16/2011.

¹¹⁸Virginia Chronicle & Norfolk & Portsmouth General Advertiser, August 18, 1792.

establishment of the rights of mankind.”¹¹⁹ Americans had a keen interest in the affair of France, since the latter’s attempts to establish a republican form of government closely mirrored those of the United States. In France’s example, Americans saw their own struggle for liberty and the desire to throw off the oppressive yoke of tyranny and monarchy.

The first opinion piece proffered on the subject of the French Revolution is dated October 18, 1792 and signed by “Marcus.” Expressing incredulity at fellow Americans who were monarchical sympathizers, he pointed out that “...tyrants should view any abridgment of power as in infringement of law and government, is not to be wondered at, but that Republicans, and men enjoying all the blessings of freedom, should discover the smallest predilection in favor of despotism is somewhat astonishing.” Speculating on the Revolution and its possible failure, he went on to suggest that “if the King is an enemy to the Constitution which he has sworn to maintain, and is opposed to the liberties and happiness of the people he is a traitor, and deserves not only to lose the crown, but his life. Such would be the language of an independent free citizen.... The friend of mankind sees through the contemplative eye of philanthropy and reason, that tho' the fire of liberty may be extinguished in France, a spark may be kindled even in the ministers and agents of destruction, and the tyrant may be consumed by his own fire.”¹²⁰

“Marcus’s” unqualified support for the French Revolution was typical of the many Americans voicing their opinions in the Virginia press. His argument essentially

¹¹⁹ Ibid, September 8, 1792.

¹²⁰“Marcus.” Ibid. October 18, 1792.

posited that since France helped the United States to achieve her republican ideals, Americans should allow France to do the same. Those who opposed the Revolution were guilty of ingratitude. And, in a very real sense, he was right; the United States was deeply indebted to the French. In considering the totality of the country's support for the fledgling American independence movement, France may be rightly considered to be the midwife of the birth of American republicanism. The refinement of the question in public opinion then became, to whom should Americans show gratitude? To the French people? Or to Louis?

France, ever desirous to check the designs of the British, who had established their global hegemony at the conclusion of the Seven Years War, entered into a Franco-American Alliance in 1778. Consequently, France's help with both army and naval operations in the American Revolution greatly hastened the conclusion of the war to the advantage of the patriots. Jacques Necker, Louis's finance minister, underwrote French military assistance almost exclusively by continual borrowing, imposing no new direct taxation upon the French people during this period. Necker then obscured the true costs of France's war involvement in the first-ever publication of the state of French finances, the *Compte rendu au roi*. All told, the total cost to France for her wartime participation in the American Revolution was on the order of 1.066 billion French livres (approximately \$202,000,000 in today's dollars).¹²¹ When the subsequent administrators were forced into increasing taxes, owing to the country's debt crisis, the measures met with

¹²¹William Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution*, 2nd ed. (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 67-68.

predictable resistance.¹²² The financial crisis engendered by France's support of the American war effort directly precipitated the calling of the Estates General and the upheavals that led to the French Revolution. As Ronald Hoffman has noted, "If the costs of the Revolution (American) to the United States were heavier than we care to recognize, the costs to France of her participation in that war were even heavier: not only the usual costs of war but also bankruptcy and the subsequent rending of her entire social fabric. That the French Revolution on balance proved beneficial should not obscure the fact that France suffered wounds far more severe than any endured by the United States."¹²³

Following "Marcus's" letter to Messrs. Baxter and Wilson in October, no correspondent wrote to the paper on the subject of the Revolution for several months. The *Chronicle* did continue to feature pieces on and provide news of the goings on in France. In the November 7, 1792 edition, a brief article appeared praising the efforts of a "gallant Amazon" by the name of Lacome "who boldly stormed the palace of the Tuilleries, amidst the havoc made by the Swiss Guards....but when the enemy was overcome and resistance at an end, she appeared in the amiable garb of humanity, defending from violence and outrage, men, who, having thrown down their arms, confessed themselves vanquished and sued for quarter." For this, she received a "civic crown" from the "Federists" who witnessed her bravery, but she appeared before the

¹²²Conversion calculation performed by William Roberds and Francois Velde at the author's request. Messrs. Roberds and Velde are economists at the United States Federal Reserve in Atlanta and Chicago, respectively. The livre was equivalent to the livre tournois, and it equals \$0.19 in today's dollars. The livre's silver content was 4.505g.

¹²³ Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert, Eds. *Diplomacy and the Revolution: The Franco-American Alliance of 1778* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1981), 77.

National Assembly, and” presented this crown to the President, as homage paid to the patriotism of the Legislature.”¹²⁴ The depiction of Lacombe as the humane revolutionary, and the Assembly’s reward for her compassion towards the victims of the attack on the Tuilleries, maintained in the mind’s eye of the Virginia reading public the image of righteous fighters for French liberty. The French revolutionary had not yet degraded into the monster of Jacobinism.

At the advent of 1793, the *Chronicle* was following events surrounding the matter of the King’s trial. News of January 19th of that year described the machinations by the National Convention some two months earlier regarding Louis -- namely whether the King could be legally tried. The *Chronicle* reported that the Convention passed the resolution to try the monarch unanimously, noting that “for want of room, we cannot present our readers with the many interesting arguments of this momentous question.”¹²⁵ In the same edition, the newspaper reported that the previous evening the young men of the Norfolk Borough gave a ball at Captain John Archer’s “in commemoration of the death of the Combined Armies of Austria and Prussia, by the Armies of the French Republic.”¹²⁶ This ball was thrown to fete the French army’s success and to express “gratitude to a nation that greatly contributed to the Independence and Happiness of America, and are now contending for the establishment of their own.”¹²⁷

Interestingly, on January 26, 1793, five days after the execution of Louis, it was reported that a group of men met in Norfolk, dined at the Borough Tavern to celebrate

¹²⁴“Paris September 5: Female Intrepidity,” *Virginia Chronicle & Norfolk & Portsmouth General Advertiser*, November 17, 1792.

¹²⁵*Ibid.*, January 19, 1793.

¹²⁶*Ibid.*

¹²⁷*Ibid.*, January 26, 1793.

“the successes of the Arms of the French Republic over her despotic enemies.” The revelers would not (and could not) have known of the fate of the French monarch. This celebration was accompanied by a salute fired from the Town-Point, with a return of fifteen cannon shots from the old fort, and the day was spent with “harmony and hilarity...patriotic songs were sung and the following Toasts were drunk:”

The Republic for France: - May it vanquish the scourge of tyrants and protector of the oppressed; The National Convention - May its measures be directed by wisdom and crowned with success; The Generals Dumourier (sic) and Custine and the armies of France: May their virtue be above temptation. Three cheers; The President of the United States of America: May his country's gratitude be equal to his merit's ruin. Three Cheers; Prosperity to the towns of Norfolk and Portsmouth: May a love of Republican Liberty ever characterize these citizens; Three Cheers; The Congress: May the Members never seek applause from party principles, but always deserve it from public spirit; May sentiment and policy for ever united the Republics of France and America. Three Cheers; The Rights of Man: - May they be well understood throughout the Universe; The Duke of Brunswick's fate to all the abettors of tyranny; May the example of France be followed by every oppressed nation in the universe; May the Spirit by which France obtained her liberty pervade the whole world; The memory of all patriots who have died in defence of liberty; The fair daughters of France who have contributed their aid in liberating their country; Reformation to all Aristocrats; and, the cause of liberty throughout the universe, and perdition to the man who owes his greatness to his country.¹²⁸

The Borough Tavern in Norfolk seems to have been a focal point for social gatherings in the town and surrounding areas. In addition to such political meetings, the Tavern often put on presentations for the public, i.e., displays of captured African

¹²⁸Ibid.

animals, a replica of the city of Jerusalem, as well as numerous plays and operettas. It would have been the logical meeting place for local men to express their political views and tout the virtues of the French quest for republican ideals.

In general, news of the continent took on the order of one to two months to reach the United States. It was not until March of 1793 that rumors of the King's execution reached Virginia, by means of ships arriving from abroad, intensifying the debate over the nature of Americans' relationship and duties to the France, as a country, and, more specifically, to the French monarch. Hints of Louis's death reached the *Chronicle's* readers in the March 16, 1793 edition of the paper, which featured an "Extract from Lindsay's Hotel Diary" dated five days earlier, containing the following entry:

This day arrived in thirty days from Oporto the brigantine Bacchus, captain Venderman, who gives the following information viz. That on the ninth of Feb. the packet arrived from England after a short passage, and on the 10th...several Captains called on board, and...offered that they had seen the papers brought by the English Packet, which contained intelligence "-That the Mob of Paris had by force seized the unfortunate LOUIS and beheaded him!" there was no account of the Queen or Dauphin, but we may augur that....the other branches of the Royal Family could not long exist.¹²⁹

Lindsay's Hotel in Norfolk most certainly housed sailors and ship captains arriving into port, and the diary entries made by its guests constituted the latest news coming from abroad. An "Extract from Lindsay's Hotel Diary" was a regular feature in the *Chronicle*. One week prior to the printing of the above extract, two correspondents, "An American" and "W." appeared in the newspaper, venturing opinions about Louis and

¹²⁹ "Extract from Lindsay's Hotel Diary," Ibid. March 16, 1793.

the royal family. Given the date of their appearance in the *Chronicle*, and the language of their pieces, it is unclear and improbable that they had heard rumours regarding the execution of the king; they were merely commenting on his fate. Moreover, they could not have known that news of his death would be announced the following week. “An American” ignited the ensuing war of correspondents by alleging:

They (his fellow Americans) rejoice at the misfortunes of a Prince, who not many years past, saved them from utter ruin. Had he not given us assistance, how many of our heroes would ever have suffered by the hands of the executioner, for what would by our enemies have been called rebellion? What liberty should we have enjoyed at this day?...we were grateful so long as in need of assistance - but when independence was secured, past favours were forgotten; and we would behold with pleasure, our greatest benefactor exposed to all the indignities, which a licentious mob chose to offer. If this is not ingratitude, what is?”¹³⁰

“W.,” in the same edition, responded to the generic charge of American ingratitude by offering:

Whilst every humane breast must sympathize with the Royal Family of France...all the convulsions now agitating that kingdom, have proceeded from the Queen's patronage of the American cause; and had that sprung from her zeal for its freedom, it would have been laudable; but on the contrary, it arose from her avowed enmity to the English nation.-The King...by sanctioning the union of the Clergy, Nobles and Commons, into one House: his fatal connivance at this Act, which destroyed degree, and consequently the veneration due both to the propriety of rank, and to which property is entitled,-at the same moment unlinked all order and subordination.-The motives for the Queen's conduct were fatally vindictive; so the policy of Louis, wretchedly temporizing in that first destructive step, his present lamentable situation is ascribable alone, to his

¹³⁰“An American,” Ibid. March 9, 1793.

subsequent weakness and irresolution-on his repeated voluntary perjuries. Charity commands an awful pause.¹³¹

Thus, by the March 9, 1793 edition, the contours of the argument had been laid out for debate before the Norfolk reading public. “An American” alleged ingratitude on the part of his fellow countrymen; “W.” suggested the opposite; the guilt fell upon the weakness of Louis’s character and the vindictiveness of his queen. He made a somewhat strange argument in that he acknowledged the monarchy’s support of the American Revolution, but charged that it arose from bad motives. Her “patronage of the American cause” had it proceeded from good intentions would have been admirable – that she did it out of spite of the English militated against the nobility of the French position. Somehow, good results originating from bad intentions can justify a monarch’s demise.

The following week, “Viriniensis” took up the cause of “An American” and sought to expand his argument that Americans were bound by duty to support Louis:

I observe in your last, a person who calls himself An AMERICAN, very justly accuses our citizens of ingratitude to the King of France. It is certain that whenever a kindness or favor is done, an obligation is created on the part of the receiver, by which he is bound in duty to return the favour, or at least to be thankful to the author thereof whatever means he may have used in bestowing it: nor can any conduct of the benefactor towards others, however vicious it may be, do away the obligation... Monarchs, and the uninterrupted succession for such a length of time, implies a consent of the people to submit to the established government-this implied consent of the governed, vests in the Monarch such a right to those powers as is certainly sufficient to justify an attempt to recover them when they are forcibly detained.¹³²

¹³¹ “W.,” Ibid. March 9, 1793.

¹³² “Viriniensis,” Ibid. March 16, 1793.

In the very same edition that “*Virginiensis*” expounded on the ingratitude of Americans, Reverend Anthony Walke made a first appearance on the subject, using the guise of “*Philanthropos*.”

The Attention of the Publick hath been lately drawn to the important Change in the Affairs of France, & the Americans are charged with Ingratitude because they exult on the Occasion, while their Benefactors, the King & Queen, it is said, languish in Confinement. But I am of Opinion that, on a fair Investigation, they will stand acquitted. They rejoice not that Lewis & Antoinette are wretched, but that the People will at length be happy. They applaud not the cruel Deeds of Faction, but the noble exertions of injured Virtue...Are they not indebted to the Nation in general, as much as to that Court, which is now no more? And in a Cause like that of France ought they not, as Men & Citizens of the World, to lay aside all partial Considerations, & stand forth the Advocates of Liberty & Justice? How long would the Peasants of Europe groan under a Load of Oppression, if a Spark of Freedom kindling in the Bosoms of the most enlightened, did not excite them to every generous Effort to restrain the Power, which holds them in Bondage?... Let us hope that the Fields of Carnage may soon be converted into fertile Plains.-...Let it then be the Boast of Americans that, while they keep a watchful Eye upon the Hand of Power, they delight in the Government of mild & equitable Laws. Such a System of Conduct cannot fail to produce the most salutary Effects.¹³³

In this passage, Walke clearly asserted that the bonds of duty on the part of Americans were to the French people, not the monarch. He also did not know that the king had been executed, merely that he and Marie “languish in confinement.”

Walke’s position towards the French monarchy was at times contradictory towards his feelings towards the British king during the American Revolution. While Walke was at odds with Jefferson’s position during the American conflict, he initially,

¹³³Walke as “*Philanthropos*,” Ibid.

like Jefferson, sympathized with the aims of the French Revolution. Jefferson had served as U.S. Minister to France from 1785 to 1789 and, like so many other Americans, was sympathetic with the cause of the French Revolution. How well Jefferson and Walke knew each other, though, is unclear. Jefferson was approximately twelve years Walke's senior (the exact year and date of Walke's birth is unknown), but it is unlikely that they had much early contact with each other, since Walke came of age in the Norfolk area on the Chesapeake, far from Jefferson's boyhood home of Tuckahoe in the western Piedmont region of Virginia. It is likely, though, that the two men's paths crossed on multiple occasions, particularly in social and political contexts.

In a letter to George Wythe, written on August 13, 1786 from Paris, Jefferson described the baleful effects of the French monarchy. "If anybody thinks that kings, nobles, or priests are good conservators of the public happiness, send him here. It is the best school in the universe to cure him of that folly....Preach my dear Sir, a crusade against ignorance; establish and improve the law for education....Let our countrymen know, that the people alone can protect us against these evils."¹³⁴ In the age of restricted information and the provincial nature of Virginia society, Jefferson's observations on the French monarchy would have carried tremendous influence and would have probably had significant bearing on how Walke conceptualized the French Revolution.

The execution of the French king was confirmed in the March 23, 1793 edition of the *Chronicle*. Thereafter, the monarch's fate could no longer be speculated upon. A

¹³⁴ Adrienne Koch and William Peden. "Thomas Jefferson to Mr. Wythe", August 13, 1786. *The Life and Selected Writings of Thomas Jefferson, Including the Autobiography, the Declaration of Independence & His Public and Private Letters* (New York: the Modern Library, 2004), 366.

piece by “Philanthropos” appeared once again, this time with full knowledge of the king’s demise. While he observed that Americans charged with ingratitude should be allowed to vindicate themselves, Louis’s crime did not merit such a severe punishment (he suggested exile as a preferred option), and he affirmed that “If the People of France groaned under tyrannical Power, Resistance was just & natural.” He assigned responsibility for the fate of the king upon Louis himself. “But have not the Sons of aristocratic Pride & Insolence, marking their Footsteps with Blood, precipitated his unhappy Fate?” He concluded that “It is to be hoped that such cruel Contests of sanguinary Punishments will become less frequent. Spectacles of Agony, wherever exhibitted (sic), tend to harden & to corrupt the Heart, destroying that natural Sympathy which ought to glow in every Bosom, & would certainly encrease (sic) the general Happiness.”¹³⁵ In other words, Louis’s death was lamentable, but he was collateral damage in the people’s quest to throw off the yoke of tyranny. It was “Philanthropos’s” hope that bloodletting would become less frequent and, by inference, that the political realm in France would eventually stabilize.

As this editorial debate played out in March and April, it became a frenzied contest of words for the correspondents. These exchanges seemed to be highly competitive, where each man sought to outdo the other with prose, wit, and acumen. Subsequent contributions to the paper came from “Brutus” at the end of March and a strange piece, submitted the following month by “Peter Trimsharp,” who attacked the pro-monarchical position of “Virginiensis.” “The baleful influence, produced by the

¹³⁵“Philanthropos,” Ibid. March 23, 1793.

death of Kings, was never more conspicuous, than its melancholy effects on the disconsolate "Virginiensis." The painfully excited feelings of this Writer, has precipitated him into a malignancy, the symptoms of which bears every affinity with a frantic Hydrophobia, or a ranting insanity of mind." Continuing on, he advised "Virginiensis" in the following vein, "In the interim, permit me to beseech and conjure you to be composed, suffer not your imagination to be afflicted by "Assassins-Butchers, &c." they are naught but phantoms, like an *ignis fatuus* that plays mischievously, in mazes to the disturbance of your brain."¹³⁶ There is no evidence that "Peter Trimsharp" was an actual name; it was likely, also, a pseudonym. It is probable that Walke knew the identity of this correspondent, as he lived in Kempesville in Princess Anne County, the same community that "Trimsharp" identified himself as being from in his signature block. Nonetheless, the tone of the attacks upon one another was becoming increasingly vitriolic. In May of that year, Walke as "Philanthropos" wrote again, perhaps responding to "Trimsharp's" personal attack, this time admonishing his fellow correspondents about personalizing the French conflict too much and their lack of civility to one another.

The interesting Subject of the day is the Contest in Europe between the Friends of Monarchy and Republicanism: but our writers, a few excepted, display as much acrimony as if Norfolk was the Theatre of War, and themselves the Actors. Let us reflect a little. Are we not reposing in the bosom of a peaceful happy country, remote from the din of arms, and strangers to the haughty mandates of contending Chieftians (sic)? Let us then improve the blessings which are in our power: Reason calmly on the violent struggles in Europe, and join in a fervent wish, that the World may soon know the advantages of Peace and free Government.¹³⁷

¹³⁶"Peter Trimsharp," Ibid. April 6, 1793.

¹³⁷"Philanthropos," Ibid. May 11, 1793.

Walke sought to strike a moderating tone for the discussion. His enjoinder to be reflective and “reason calmly” on the problems before them speak to his eighteenth-century values and how he thought gentlemen should deport themselves. How striking this is when compared to today’s news media and the ability to “post” to the Internet one’s opinions. Most upper-class eighteenth-century Anglo-American society highly valued civility as a personal virtue; however, the tone of these editorial contributions reminds the reader that humans frequently showed the same uncivil tendencies then that they do now when engaging in political debate.

“Philanthropos’s” May comments were the last said on the issue of Americans and the French monarchy. While it would be tempting to theorize that he somehow silenced the debate, the more probable explanation is that the public attention moved on to the next captivating topic. By September of that year, the prolonged rivalries between the Jacobin and Girondin factions in France within the Convention were settled, when the Jacobins gained ascendancy and initiated the Reign of Terror. Events of France continued to be reported, but Norfolk correspondents must have felt that these issues did not touch immediately upon them, and, therefore, did not feel a need to comment on them.

Jefferson, the most known Virginia spokesman on the plight of the French, wrote in January of 1793 to William Short about the Jacobins, justifying their bloody excesses as necessary to the pursuit of liberty:

I considered that sect as the same with the Republican patriots, and the Feuillants as the Monarchical patriots. The Jacobins...yielded to the Feuillants; and tried the experiment of retaining their hereditary Executive. The experiment failed completely, and would have brought the re-establishment of despotism....The Jacobins knew this,

and that the expunging that office was of absolute necessity...In the struggle which was necessary, many guilty persons fell without forms of trial, and with them some innocent. These I deplore as much as anybody...But I deplore them as I should have done had they fallen in battle. It was necessary to use the arm of the people...The liberty of the whole earth was depending on the issue of the contest...¹³⁸

He continued to follow French politics assiduously throughout his entire political career, but near the close of his life, a much chastened Jefferson reflected on the trajectory of the French Revolution. In a letter to the Marquis de Lafayette, written on February 14, 1815, Jefferson pondered on the destruction that the Revolution had wrought. Believing that the republican effort probably should have stopped at the securing of certain rights within the framework of a constitutional monarchy, Jefferson ventured:

...they (the enthusiasts for the French Revolution) did not weight the hazards of a transition from one form of government to another...You differed from them. You were for stopping there, and for securing the Constitution which the National Assembly had obtained. Here too you were right; and from this fatal error of the republicans, from their separation from yourself and the constitutionalists...flowed all the subsequent sufferings and crimes of the French nation....in the end, the limited monarchy they had secured was exchanged for the unprincipled and bloody tyranny of Robespierre...¹³⁹

This statement, uttered by Virginia's most distinguished son, most likely echoed the change-of-heart of many of his fellow statesmen, who had fervently supported the goals of establishing a republican form of government, but he, like Walke, soon became

¹³⁸ Adrienne Koch and William Peden. "Thomas Jefferson to William Short," *The Life and Selected Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, January 3, 1793, 478.

¹³⁹ Ibid. "Thomas Jefferson to the Marquis de Lafayette," February 14, 1815, 598.

horrified by the excesses of the Revolution. Walke initially espoused enthusiasm for the French cause, because it conformed to his notion of the immorality of constrained liberty. In the case of the French, the desire for liberty sprung spontaneously from the people; in the American Revolution, independence had been forced on unwilling subjects from above by ambitious men. Perhaps another reason for the discrepancy between his disdain for the goals of the American Revolution and that of the French is that in the case of France it was an abstraction far removed from the reality of his quotidian concerns. The American Revolution had had a direct impact on him and his family's livelihood. Political engagement from afar is always an easier feat.

A perusal of his writings confirms that Walke was a profoundly humane man in the way in which humanity was understood in the eighteenth century. He was concerned with temporal and spiritual pain and maladies and strove to uphold those core Enlightenment ideals that constituted the underpinning of his society. However, he, like all men, was all too mortal and subject to the human capacity for selfishness of which Adam Smith wrote in his essays, asking his reader to consider the contemplations of an individual, should the Chinese empire be destroyed by an earthquake. Smith observed that "he would, I imagine, first of all, express very strongly his sorrow for the misfortune of that unhappy people, he would make many melancholy reflections upon the precariousness of human life, and the vanity of all the labours of man...And when all this fine philosophy was over, when all these humane sentiments had been once fairly expressed, he would pursue his business or his pleasure, take his repose or his diversion,

with the same ease and tranquility, as if no such accident had happened.”¹⁴⁰ As the French conflagration progressed, Walke was horrified by the political bloodletting in France and much later by Napoleon’s designs on Europe. But as was the case for most Americans, the conflict was simply too far away for him to be ideologically engaged to the same degree as he had been with the question of American independence.

¹⁴⁰Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments. To which is added a Dissertation on the Origin of Languages* (London: Printed for A. Millar et. al., 1767), 212.

CHAPTER SIX

SHORT REMARKS ON SLAVERY & THE TREATMENT OF NEGROES –1793

*...the Man of Magnanimity & Virtue, the Patriot & Philosopher, whose Heart is warm in the Interests of Humanity, & who regards the Happiness of future Generations will, I trust, accord with me in the Principle of Emancipation.*¹⁴¹

In 1792, Reverend Anthony Walke sat down to write out a description of the world as he knew it. His “Geographical Notes”¹⁴² are part of a much larger set of social, political, and religious essays that he intended to keep for his personal use and to circulate among his family and friends. Under the category of “The World,” he noted that it was the third planet from the Sun “at the Distance of about 95,173,000 Miles, or according to others 81,000,000 Miles.” After enumerating the earth’s diameter, circumference, its meridians and other attributes, he described its divisions and number of inhabitants, which he estimated to be approximately 943,000,000. On following pages, he listed the countries and regions with which he was familiar, as well as all the states he knew at the time. For each listing, he described its length, breadth, boundaries, population, language, form of government and religion. When he came to Africa, he limned the attributes of the following countries/regions as he understood them: “Egypt,” “the States of Barbary,” “Zaara” (or Sahara), “Nubia,” “Abyssinia,” and “Negroland” (by which he, presumably, intended sub-Saharan Africa). Of “Negroland,” he wrote that it was 4,300 miles in length, 840 miles in breadth, bounded on the north by “Desarts,” on the east by “Gaoga” (which lies in the modern country of Burkina Faso), and to the south

¹⁴¹*Short Remarks on Slavery & the Treatment of Negroes – 1793*, Anthony Walke Papers, 1784-1805, Special Collections, The Filson Historical Society, Louisville.

¹⁴²*Geographical Notes – 1792*, Anthony Walke Papers, The Filson Historical Society, Louisville Kentucky.

and west by the Atlantic Ocean. Its capital was “Mandinga,” (or “Mandigos”); its government comprised petty monarchies, and its religion was pagan. The term “Negroland” was not Walke’s invention; it was a common designation for sub-Saharan Africa that appeared on eighteenth-century maps of the world. Maps of Africa, such as those of Thomas Jefferys, surely circulated among the Anglo-American literate class, of which Walke was a part. Jefferys (c.1719–1771), known as the geographer to King George III, was an English cartographer who was a prominent eighteenth-century map producer. His map of the African subcontinent, printed in London c. 1748, contains many of the same fanciful geographical names that Walke used in his “Notes” and was a common contemporary depiction of the African continent that Walke surely would have seen.

While the use of the term “Negroland” to describe this part of Africa sounds humorous and anachronistic to our ears, the term for Walke can be interpreted to hold a special significance. It not only connoted the regions in sub-Saharan Africa that he wished to characterize; it also may be viewed as a metaphor for the social, political and temporal realm that he inhabited. His world was permeated and constrained both physically and intellectually by the question of the morality of African slavery. His response to this social reality in his 1793 essay, *Short Remarks on Slavery & the Treatment of Negroes*, demonstrates remarkable insight into the developing consciousness among some slaveholders that the institution was, ultimately, both untenable and immoral, yet, somehow, unavoidable. Margaret Abruzzo’s work, published in 2011, *Polemical Pain: Slavery, Cruelty, and the Rise of Humanitarianism* employs

passages from Walke's "Short Remarks," to make a case for the rise of Christian humanitarianism's influence on the abolition of slavery, as well as the development of the concept of benevolence as the emulation of Jesus.¹⁴³ Walke did, indeed, argue that individuals should follow Christ's example in their treatment of others. What Abruzzo fails to recognize is Walke's active participation in the institution as a master of scores of bondsmen. Nonetheless, he does represent a transitional figure in the debate on slavery and was clearly a break from the attitudes of his Virginia ancestors. His writings incorporate not only the changing moral currents of American thought on slavery, but the ambiguities and difficulties that many thinkers encountered when contemplating the issues of emancipation and the possible integration of blacks into the community as citizens.

The fundamental fabric of the society in which he was reared makes Reverend Anthony Walke's "Short Remarks" all the more radical. His perorations on slavery were not those of a northern anti-slavery advocate; Walke was part and parcel of the society that he indicted. Arthur Pierce Middleton, in his analysis of the lives of a Virginia parson, singles Walke out as being an example of extreme wealth and privilege within the Episcopal clergy. Evaluating tax returns for 1791, Middleton says that "the Episcopal clergy, although somewhat reduced in number and prestige, were nonetheless remarkably well-to-do...Anthony Walke of Lynnhaven Parish, Princess Anne County, owned 3,880 acres of land and 47 slaves, which would have done justice to a very large planter."¹⁴⁴ By

¹⁴³Margaret Abruzzo, *Polemical Pain: Slavery, Cruelty, and the Rise of Humanitarianism* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 65.

¹⁴⁴Arthur Pierce Middleton, "The Colonial Virginia Parson," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 26, no. 3 (Jul., 1969), 429.

the time of his death in 1814, he had well in excess of sixty-five slaves distributed throughout all of his plantation holdings. When Walke formulated his thoughts on the illicitness of slavery, he was attempting to reconcile a fundamental cognitive dissonance within his own life: he lived in a physical world of slavery on which his wealth and position rested that was at odds with his intellectual life. His essay was an attempt to harmonize these very inharmonious realities with which he was confronted.

What Walke felt initially about coming into such a large inheritance of human beings is unknown. He never personalized any of his extant writings. Slavery was certainly a given part of the social fabric of his day. Sometime, however, between the probate of his father's will in 1782 and 1793, when he wrote *Short Remarks on Slavery & the Treatment of Negroes*, whatever ambivalence or ambiguities concerning slavery with which he wrestled had been resolved. He could not, and would not, accept it theologically, ethically, or legally as a sanctioned institution. He nonetheless had to accept its reality. His evolution on this issue may have had its origin in his ordination into the Protestant Episcopal Church of America by the Right Reverend Bishop William White of Philadelphia in the late spring of 1788. Through White and his time spent in Philadelphia, Walke was likely to have been exposed to new strains of thought (through White's personal relationship to British abolitionist Granville Sharp) that placed pressure on the thought of many Virginia masters that slavery was an unquestioned "given." Interestingly, in Walke's footnotes, all the recognizable authors both pro and con on the

slavery issue appear to have been British. He cited not a single identifiable American source. What this suggests is that Walke either travelled to England frequently, either on theological or commercial business, or had significant literary or personal access to British thinkers of the day. Circulating libraries were common in Norfolk, and books coming from abroad on ships were often advertised in the *Virginia Chronicle*. His familiarity with British anti-slavery efforts may have been the result, however, of more direct contact with British theological circles. He travelled to England at least once, in 1796, as established by the title of an essay in his personal collection, “Considerations on the State of public Affairs in 1796-Written in England.”¹⁴⁵ While, the location and extent of his theological training has also not been identified, it is highly likely that he was in England on many occasions, given his commercial interests in Norfolk and Britain.

When his father, Anthony Walke II, died on October 28, 1779, Anthony suddenly became a very rich man. In addition to a profusion of estate lands and personal belongings of his father, he inherited a sizable number of bondsmen; however, he was not to reap the benefits of his father’s death immediately. His father’s will, which consisted of over twenty handwritten pages and two codicils, was not probated until March 14, 1782, almost two and half years after his death. The reason for the delay in probating the will possibly resulted from the ongoing military conflict with the British and the disruption of basic legal services in the Norfolk Borough and surrounding counties. In the interim, he had *de facto* control of his father’s wealth and property. When the will was finally probated, as the oldest son, he became principal heir to Fairfields, the family

¹⁴⁵ Walke, “Considerations on the State of public Affairs in 1796-Written in England,” *To the Reader*.

plantation, many additional properties, English race horses, a considerable number of slaves, and a sizable portion of his father's books and personal household effects.

Fairfields, his principal inheritance, was built c. 1697, on land purchased by Thomas Walke, Anthony's great-grandfather, who had immigrated to the Chesapeake from Barbados in the latter half of the seventeenth century. The original Walke plantation in Barbados is a property currently referred to as Walke Spring, just above Hole Town on the southern point of the island. In the early- to mid-seventeenth century, it was home to the family, English colonists who flocked to Barbados looking to establish their personal fortunes. The Walkes most certainly cultivated sugar, using African slave labor, and eventually developed merchant contacts with the Chesapeake Bay and rivers of the growing colony of Virginia. At the time of Thomas's emigration to Virginia, he left behind at least two brothers, Robert and Jonathan, and one sister, Anne Chambers.¹⁴⁶ Whether the families of his siblings remained on the island or eventually emigrated elsewhere is unclear. The surname Walke does persist in Barbados today, with Barbadian blacks modifying it to "Walkes." In all likelihood, the original slaves at Fairfield's came from Barbados or other parts of the Caribbean with which Thomas had contact. Some of them may have come to Thomas through his father-in-law, Anthony Lawson, who, in addition to his Chesapeake holdings, had significant trade ties to Jamaica.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ April Lee Hatfield, *Atlantic Virginia: Intercolonial Relations in the Seventeenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 95.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 261.

Thomas was the master of a ship, running commodities between the Caribbean and the James River of Virginia and was a close acquaintance of William Byrd I, often performing commercial errands between Barbados and the James on Byrd's behalf. In 1691 he secured 360 acres of Southside Virginia (meaning south of the James River) property from ship captain William Hillyard (another Barbadian) in exchange for three tons of pork.¹⁴⁸ The plantation house, "Fairfields," was completed by 1697 and described by anecdotal sources as "an almost baronial establishment with liveried black servants, blacksmiths, wagon-makers, saddlers, and tradesmen imported from England."¹⁴⁹ Almost a century after its construction, Reverend Anthony Walke (Thomas's great-grandson), in 1782, became the heir to the property, receiving the lion's share of his father's estate.¹⁵⁰ His other brothers and sisters, issue of his father's second marriage to Mary Moseley in 1757, received properties and slaves, but, as first-born, following the tradition of primogeniture, he received the largest bequeathal of wealth.

A "List of Anthony Walke's Tithables, Lands, and Wheel Carriages, for the Year 1775", contains the names of every slave his father owned, as well as the names of overseers at the various plantations. In this tax document, his father possessed eighty-three slaves, distributed between the principal plantation Fairfields and various "quarters."¹⁵¹ Only particular (for reasons lost to time) slaves were named in Anthony Sr.'s will; the unnamed others were divided up by estate executors, upon probate. Anthony Walke Sr. took special care in bestowing the following slaves upon his son.

¹⁴⁸Ibid.

¹⁴⁹K. M. Eighmey. *The Beach* (Virginia Beach: City of Virginia Beach, 1976) 17-18.

¹⁵⁰See Illustration 2.

¹⁵¹See Appendix 1.

I give and bequeath to my Son Anthony Walke the following Negro Slaves, to wit, Old Bow, America, yellow Frank, short Jimmy, Sam, Son of Assy, old Will, Meaxico (sic), Frank and George sons of black Sarah bought of Col. Nathaniel Newton, Tom Son of Venus, Betty (who belonged to my late Wife Jane Walke) and her Daughter Aggy, Moll wife of Will, and Sukey, daughter of Assy.¹⁵²

Later in his codicil, he made special provisions for one male slave, with the implication that he was to remain in the family.

I give and bequeath all my Right and Deed on what Lands and Slaves my Father entailed on my Son Anthony Walke to my said Son Anthony Walke and his Heirs for ever, and my reason for doing this is, because by a later Act of Assembly, all Entails are rendered void. I also give and bequeath to my said Son Anthony my Negro Boy named Robin, and to his Heirs for ever, but if my said Son should leave no Issue, I then give the said Boy to my next eldest surviving Son and to his Heirs for ever.¹⁵³

Anthony Sr. followed the path of a typical Virginia gentleman and political figure within the Tidewater. He was a master of multiple plantations, a merchant operating in the Norfolk and Petersburg areas, as well as a member of the Virginia House of Burgesses, from 1752 to 1766 (during this time period he did not serve for the 1756 term, perhaps owing to the death of his wife Jane that year). George Washington, one of the many of Virginia's elite with whom the elder Walke had contact, joined that august body in 1759, as a delegate from Frederick County. The two men served contemporaneously in Williamsburg for seven years. Walke continued his merchant activities, while as a Burgess, as indicated at least once in Washington's diary. Washington noted in his diary

¹⁵²Will of Anthony Walke II.

¹⁵³Ibid.

for August 20, 1762 that he had received “1 hhd. Molasses qty. Gals. & 1 Barl. Sugar wt. 254 lbs. of Colonel Walke.” Later on November 20th of that year, Washington wrote that he travelled to Williamsburg for the purpose of paying the Walke merchant house for the commodities he had received the previous summer.¹⁵⁴ The Colonel Walke to whom Washington referred was Anthony Walke I, son of Thomas (1692-1768), who had also held a seat in the Virginia House of Burgesses, as well as being an importer of rum and sugar from the West Indies. His son, Anthony II, became a partner in his father’s business by 1762, a time during which he served contemporaneously with Washington.

Thus, the youngest Anthony Walke was both the son and grandson of members of the House of Burgesses, as well as having been reared in the political and economic milieu of Virginia slave society and Chesapeake trade. There is no available evidence that his father or grandfather held any egalitarian or progressive notions on slavery. In the April 14, 1768 *Virginia Gazette* (Virginia’s oldest newspaper, printed in Williamsburg), Anthony’s father appears as a “manager” for “a SCHEME of a LOTTERY for disposing of certain LANDS, SLAVES, and STOCKS belonging to the Subscriber”, one Bernard Moore. There were 1,840 Tickets for the auction at £10 each, for a total revenue of £18,400, with the intent of bestowing twelve “prizes” upon the winners. Among the other managers listed, in addition to Anthony Walke II, for the lottery were “John Randolph, John Baylor, George Washington, Fielding Lewis, Archibald Cary, Carter Braxton, Benjamin Harrison, Ralph Wormley, Richard Henry Lee, Thomas Walker, Thomas Tabb, Edmund Pendleton, Peter Lyons, Patrick Courts,

¹⁵⁴Donald Jackson and Dorothy Twohig, eds., *The Diaries of George Washington*, November 20, 1762.

Neil Jamieson, William Bradley, Alexander Donald, David Jamieson, and John Madison, Gentlemen.” The listing of all of these scions of Virginia society would have lent prestige to the auction, although some of the men may not have directly participated. The lottery was to divide various properties belonging to Moore, as well as capital improvements on the land, and well in excess of fifty slaves. Many of the slaves to be raffled off in this callous manner were advertised by their professions. A sizeable number were listed as colliers, blacksmiths, and sawyers, such as “A Negro Man named Billy, about 22 Years old, an exceeding trusty good Forgeman, as well at the Finery as under the Hammer, and understands putting up his Fire: Also his Wife named Lucy, a young Wench, who works exceeding well both in the House and Field.”¹⁵⁵ A typical description of female slaves ran “A fine breeding Woman named Pat, lame of one Side, with Child, and her three Children, Lat, Milley, and Charlotte.”¹⁵⁶ Two young slaves advertised in 1768, named “London” and “Hannah, may have been “won” by Anthony Walke II, as these names appear in his 1775 list of tithables for Princess Anne County. In short, based on his practices and participation in slave purchases and the use of bondsmen, Reverend Anthony’s father was fundamentally no different than the typical eighteenth-century Virginia master.

In 1793, when Walke penned His *Short Remarks*, he argued that there was no social or theological justification for slavery. This clearly represented a rupture with the mindset of his father. Perhaps liberated intellectually by the patriarch’s death, and bolstered by new strains of religious thought, he felt free to explore the slave question in

¹⁵⁵Virginia Gazette, November 30, 1769.

¹⁵⁶Ibid.

a way in which he would have never dared previously. He also, foremost, considered himself a man of letters. His ruminations on philosophy, religion, poetry, gender, and politics indicate a man who conceived of himself as a gentleman and thinker. He viewed himself as an intellectual combatant in a world in which words and ideas were being vigorously debated. Ironically, this was written the same year of the invention of Eli Whitney's cotton gin. It is interesting to note that at the time of its writing, the import of this invention had not become widespread, and the notion remained in many slaveholders' minds that slavery as an institution was not irreversible. Popular culture (and some historians) tends to view slavery in the South as a monolithic institution; however, there was actually a gradual intellectual evolution on the subject, from the first slave purchase by John Rolfe (Walke's own ancestor) from a Dutch man-of-war in 1619, and 1793, when some slave owners, particularly in the Upper South, began to feel an uneasiness with the institution's continued existence.

The Revolutionary War functioned as a galvanizing force in the new-found questioning of slavery. By the early federal period, all Americans, and not only those who possessed slaves, began to sense the chasm between their republican principles and the practice of slavery.¹⁵⁷ St. George Tucker, writing in 1796, proffered that "...it will appear how perfectly irreconcilable a state of slavery is to the principles of democracy, which form the basis and foundation of our government."¹⁵⁸ The presence of slavery in the new republic was a reminder of one group's attempt to constrain the will of another

¹⁵⁷Charles F. Irons, *The Origins of Proslavery Christianity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 59.

¹⁵⁸St. George Tucker, *A Dissertation on Slavery: with a Proposal for the Gradual Abolition of it in the State of Virginia* (Philadelphia: Printed for Mathew Carey, 1796), 50.

and was inconsistent with the language of liberty the newly-minted citizens of the United States embraced.¹⁵⁹ Walke, like other southern slaveholders, became intellectually preoccupied with the morality of slavery, yet unable to act upon his ideas. As Crane Brinton elegantly characterized the dichotomy of men's thoughts and actions, "They are almost, but not quite, unaware of the tragic contrast which is eating out the heart of the poet and philosopher-the contrast between what men are and what men want to be."¹⁶⁰

Virginia had the largest slave population of all the states, with almost forty-five percent its households connected with the institution in 1790.¹⁶¹ Many white Virginians believed slavery to be a moral evil, but one from which extrication would be difficult. Although Virginia's slave population was the highest in the Upper South, whites believed, at minimum, that further expansion of the institution should be checked. Thus, the debate began as to how swiftly dependence on slavery should be eradicated. Walke's writings express this new uncertainty and anxiety in certain quarters of the established slaveholding class. What is fascinating about his essay is that it directly refutes the common assumption that southern slaveholders were all of one mind; it rejects Winthrop Jordan's argument that the late eighteenth century was an era of missed opportunities for the anti-slavery movement. David Brion Davis has correctly suggested that "the movement was not ineffective in the long run. It is a fact of great importance that William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, and Abraham Lincoln could all appeal to the

¹⁵⁹David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1975), 86.

¹⁶⁰Crane Brinton, *The Lives of Talleyrand* (New York: Norton, 1963), 227.

¹⁶¹Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution*, 61.

anti-slavery principles and pronouncements of the Revolutionary generation.”¹⁶² Walke was a voice of that revolutionary generation, and his was even more significant, in that he was embedded in the very system that he criticized. His “Short Remarks” challenges the monolithic portrayal of the Virginia master, and make a distinct break with the type of master characterized by Landon Carter’s famous diary, standard fare in college classes to describe the mind of a southern slaveholder.

Like the wealthy planter Robert Carter III of Nominy Hall in Westmoreland County, Walke arrived at his opposition to slavery on theological grounds. Carter, who had disavowed his Anglican religious heritage to become a Baptist in September of 1778, moved theologically again to a mystical congregation, the New Jerusalem Church, in 1789, when the Baptist Church embraced an increasingly pro-slavery position. The New Jerusalem Church’s founder, Emanuel Swedenborg, advocated the belief in introspection and that faith included good works. Swedenborg also spoke of the last half of the eighteenth century as a new spiritual awakening that followed his personal “illumination” in 1757. Material conditions of the world would not change; however, a new spiritual age of rebirth was upon the planet. As a result of his embrace of Swedenborgianism, Carter began to gradually manumit his approximately 500 slaves in 1792.¹⁶³ Carter, becoming more eccentric over time, sought manumission as a complement to his new-found spirituality, albeit from a much marginalized mystical religious movement. Walke sought to assault slavery textually, operating within the boundaries of traditional

¹⁶²Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution*, 257.

¹⁶³Shomer S. Zwelling, “Robert Carter’s Journey: From Colonial Patriarch to New Nation Mystic,” *American Quarterly*, 38, no. 4 (autumn, 1986), 613-636.

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scripture. As the Revolutionary War ended and new identities for Americans were being formed, men such as Carter and Walke wrestled with questions of liberty, new political and spiritual frontiers, and a world in which their own positions in the social hierarchy were challenged.

In the prelude to his essay, Walke described the issue of slavery as a sectional issue of special interest to the South. For him, by the 1790s, the geographical schism of slavery was already embedded in American society. He articulated this division when he stated:

The following Observations are designed for the Perusal of those who have not Time or Opportunity to study voluminous Works, and the Author trusts that they are not unworthy of Attention. He hopes that the Reader will not decide until he hath gone through the whole. The subject is peculiarly interesting to the Southern States & to all the Friends of Justice & Humanity.¹⁶⁴

He fired his opening salvo across the bow of slavery with the following:

Strange as it may appear to an unprejudiced & philosophic Mind, there are Men, - there are even Christians by Profession, who are warm Advocates for Slavery! And, though hardly to be believed, they sometimes defend their Opinion by Arguments drawn from ancient Scriptures! Those Books were written to record the important Events of past Ages, to improve Mankind, to instruct them in the Principles of Religion & Virtue & to render them as happy as possible. Ought such Writings then to be perverted or misapplied, to serve the Purposes of blind Bigotry, insatiable Avarice or cruel Oppression? Surely nothing can be more absurd.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴Walke, *Short Remarks on Slavery & the Treatment of Negroes*.

¹⁶⁵Ibid.

In this opening paragraph, he responded directly to the “Vindication of the Slavery of Negroes,” in which the time-worn trope taken from Genesis of the justification for the enslavement of the descendants of Canaan, for “a Servant of Servants shall he be unto his Brethren.”¹⁶⁶ The full title and author of “A Vindication” have not been yet identified by a search of extant eighteenth-century slavery pamphlets.

Walke responded:

Passages quoted in Vindication of the Slavery of Negroes is that, where Noah cursed Canaan: Cursed be Canaan, a Servant of Servants shall he be unto his Brethren. If the Israelites, when they subdued the Land of Canaan were encouraged by these Words of Noah in their hostile Designs, it was natural: But shall Christians, at the present Day, enjoying the Light of the Gospel, pretend thereby to justify the Slavery of Negroes? Alas how vain, how base the Attempt! For is it not extremely improbable, considering the various Revolutions & Mixtures in the World, that all Negroes should be the Descendants of Ham or Canaan?¹⁶⁷

He then suggested that the curse of Ham only applied to an act of individual disobedience and could not be collectively applied to all persons from Africa. “That sentence was intended to punish the Offence of Ham, who had been wanting in filial Respect, & therefore was very reprehensible. Slavery, or the Obligation to serve another without one’s own Consent, arose from arbitrary Power, which forced the weak to submit to Oppression.”¹⁶⁸ The foregoing assertion is important, because Walke was postulating that slavery arose when one empowered group sought to impose an arbitrary will on a less powerful people. He instructed the reader that the Israelites’ desire to be delivered

¹⁶⁶Ibid.

¹⁶⁷Ibid.

¹⁶⁸Ibid.

from bondage in Egypt was a noble sentiment and one to be emulated. In seeking to explain Africans' blackness upon first contact, Europeans utilized the story of Ham, son of Noah as a justification for enslavement. Winthrop Jordan argues that there were scriptural bases for using the Curse of Ham as an explanation for blackness, but these were Jewish, not Christian, in origin. He attributes propagation of the linkage between slavery, blackness, and the curse of Ham to early church fathers St. Augustine and St. Jerome. Jordan asserts that "they casually accepted the assumption that Africans were descended from one or several of Ham's four sons, an assumption which became universal in Christendom despite the obscurity of its origins."¹⁶⁹

One pro-slavery advocate whom Walke singled out for particular scorn was the English Reverend Raymund Harris. The latter used scripture to justify bondage in his pamphlet, *Scriptural researches on the licitness of the slave trade, showing its conformity with the principles of natural and revealed religion, delineated in the sacred writings of the word of God*, written in 1788 and followed by a second edition "to which are added scriptural directions for the proper treatment of slaves, and a review of some scurrilous pamphlets..." Harris, whose real name was Raymundo Hormoza, was a Spanish Jesuit priest who came to England sometime after Spain expelled the religious order from its dominions in 1767. After the publication of his original pamphlet, the Liverpool Corporation enlisted his services, and bestowed upon him an award of £100, as a measure

¹⁶⁹Winthrop D. Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes towards the Negro, 1550–1812* (North Carolina University Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture; London: Oxford University Press: 1968), 18.

of their appreciation. The Corporation sought to militate against the influence of the "Committee for Abolition of the Slave Trade" (formed in May of 1787) in Parliament.

This anti-slavery society was formed largely in response to Thomas Clarkson's popular tract, *An essay on the slavery and commerce of the human species, particularly the African, translated from a Latin Dissertation*, which won first prize in the University of Cambridge for the year 1785. His essay became an important piece of anti-slavery propaganda and was a result of a challenge by the Rev. Dr. Peckard, vice-chancellor of Cambridge University, who in 1784 delivered an anti-slavery speech to the student body and suggested that it be followed with an essay contest on the moral validity of the institution. Louis Taylor Merrill suggests that "the prize essayist's conclusion was an emphatic negative, with the declaration that the slave trade ought to be continued only 'if murder is strictly honorable, and Christianity is a lie'."¹⁷⁰ Quaker agitation against the slave trade greatly accelerated the formation of the Society, and it represented a turning point in the English anti-slavery movement. Clarkson became one of its most zealous members. In response to treatises such as Harris's, the Committee sponsored pamphlets, notably by James Ramsay, William Roscoe and Henry Dannett, refuting the scriptural bases of the pro-slavery argument.¹⁷¹

In the development of his essay extolling the divine sanction of the institution of slavery, Harris asserted:

¹⁷⁰Citation of Clarkson in Louis Taylor Merrill, "The English Campaign for Abolition of the Slave Trade," *The Journal of Negro History*, 30, no. 4 (Oct., 1945), 385.

Published by: Association for the Study of African American Life and History, Inc.

Accessed by: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2715027> on 05/28/2011.

¹⁷¹"Methods of the Anti-abolitionists," E. Chambré Hardman Archive.

Accessed by: <http://www.mersey-gateway.org/server.php?show=ConNarrative.90&chapterId=344> on 11/16/2011.

I am to shew no farther, than that the principles and the laws of that Religion, as far as we find them delineated in the Sacred Writings, not only never forbade the SLAVE-TRADE, or hinted the most distant opposition to the prosecution of it; but that, the same being frequently exemplified in the constant and uninterrupted practice of some of the most faithful observes of the laws and principles of that Religion, under the visible protection of God, whose favourites they were, the laws and the principles themselves were in perfect harmony with the practice of the SLAVE-TRADE...verified in the conduct of...ABRAHAM and JOSEPH, will, be sufficient, without mentioning others, to justify my assert and set the present Controversy in the clearest light of Scriptural conviction.¹⁷²

Walke could not resist responding, and he posed a scriptural challenge to Harris's use of the twenty-first chapter of Exodus as a theological justification for slavery; he countered Harris's Old Testament citations, by pointing out contradictory sayings within the same book, and suggested that the former are incompatible with the Gospel. Walke was clearly making the case that true Christians should follow the New Testament, not the Old. By invoking Christ's example, he exhorted his reader to model his own conduct after that of Jesus:

But in every Question relative to the Conduct of Christians, they should bring the Matter to the proper Standard, & decide according to the Spirit of the Gospel.¹⁷³...And can the Advocates for Slavery find one Precept of Christ or a single Trait in his Character which justifies the inhuman Practice? His Life was one Series of humane and generous Actions. His Doctrines were as mild & gentle as his Deportment: He instructed his Hearers to do Good to all, to love their Neighbour as themselves... With the Spirit of the Gospel Reason strictly accords, tending to preserve the

¹⁷²The Rev. Raymund Harris, *Scriptural Researches on the Licitness of the Slave-Trade Shewing its Conformity with the Natural and Revealed Religion, Delineated in the Sacred Writings of the Word of God* (London: Printed for John Stockday, opposite Burlington house, Piccadilly, 1788), 13.

¹⁷³Walke's footnote in *Short Remarks*: "The Jews were allowed by Moses to buy Bondmen & from the Heathen Nations around them, but the Christian makes no Distinction between Jews & Gentiles."

natural Rights of Men inviolate: Both teach us that, if we love God, we shall love our Brother also, do what is just & deprive him of natural Liberty?...the tender feelings of each virtuous Heart, which must shudder at the Idea.¹⁷⁴

He concluded his first chapter of the essay, by leveling a most explosive charge at his fellow slaveholders. “The Tyrants who live by the Sweat & Toil of their Fellowmen are not content with their Services: Their Tempers are mutually ruffled, & both Parties are frequently rendered unhappy: Therefore Slavery ought to be abolished.”¹⁷⁵ His characterization of slaveholders as “Tyrants” is, indeed, remarkable. Whether anyone outside his immediate circle of family and social acquaintances ever saw this, or whether it was a private writing not to have been shared, is unclear. It certainly would have been received in most quarters as explosive, since he was suggesting that slaveholders, and, by implication, himself, were despots who lived parasitic lives off the work of others. When he scolded slaveholders, he was taking aim at his contemporaries, the men who formed the community of which he was a member.

In Chapter Two of his essay, he systematically began to attack the legality of slavery. If an individual, Walke wrote, is bound by temporal laws from committing a “base Enterprise or action,” then certainly groups of men cannot do likewise. “An Individual is not permitted by the Law of Nature to injure or oppress his Fellow-men, therefore no Assembly of Men, or legislative Body can authorize such Oppression.... How horrid then was the Crime of the Europeans to disturb the Tranquility of those unoffending People, & after destroying thousands annually in the Attempt, to drag the

¹⁷⁴Walke, *Short Remarks on Slavery & the Treatment of Negroes*.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

Survivors into the most wretched & ignominious Slavery!” He was condemning not just the American slaveholder, but the practice of slave catching, trading, and the Middle Passage. The notion of tranquility and happiness appears repeatedly throughout all of his writings. That one individual, or group, should infringe upon the happiness of others was a most disturbing thought to him.

In the following chapter, he described the practice of slavery in antiquity and how this was accomplished by means of piratical raids and military conquest. “In the past Ages every Species of Robbery, Piracy & Depredation was considered honourable, and the most renowned Heroes of Antiquity were the Plunderers & Murderers of the Nations around them...The Custom of making Slaves of their Fellow-men prevailed among the Anglo-Saxons & those Slaves were considered in England to be an Article of Commerce, as were Slaves in old Tyre & Zidon. They are accused not only of enslaving Prisoners of War, but of making Merchandise of their nearest Relations.”¹⁷⁶ Walke observed that, according to “an Author of Veracity”, slavery in the British Isles, (particularly as practiced by “Bristol traders”) was eliminated after the people followed the exhortations of Wulfstan, Bishop of Winchester, during the Norman Conquest, to discontinue the practice. Perhaps in a sense, Walke was implicitly comparing himself to Wulfstan, both men of the cloth whose charge it was to minister to their peoples. His characterization of the heroes of antiquity is suggestive in that what they truly excelled at was plunder and murder. Slavery, for him, was an outcome of essentially criminal activity. Thus, he, at

¹⁷⁶Ibid.

once, intellectually dismantled the legal basis for slavery, and he executed an iconoclastic attack on those heroes of old that his society venerated.

His discussion then turned to the introduction of African slavery to North America, where, again, he characterized the slave's lot as "unhappy." What he did not acknowledge in this essay, but of which he surely would have been aware, is that the purchaser of the first slaves in 1619 was his own ancestor, John Rolfe.

This unhappy Race of Men, the Negroes were introduced into Virginia in the year 1620, twenty having been brought by a Dutch Ship, & sold in the Province. They may now be considered as the principal Labourers in this Country, being in Proportion to the white Inhabitants nearly as 10 to 1. The latter will not labour much, if they can by any Means hire or purchase Negroes, and, however, strange it may appear to one unacquainted with the Subject, many feel very little Regard for the sable Race. Cherishing strong Prejudices against them on Account of their coarse Features, & short Hair, as well as their humble, helpless State, they forget that all People are viewed by the great Creator & Governour of the World with an Eye of equal Tenderness. It was his Will that they should ¹⁷⁷differ in Complexion, as well as in Opinions, Language, Habits & Pursuits. The Colours which predominate are the olive, brown, copper, black & white, between which we discover various Shades. The Blessings of Providence, though varying in Kind in different Climes, are universally dispersed, & all Mankind are equally preserved by the Bounty of Heaven.¹⁷⁸

Walke challenged the racial argument for slavery, based on the slave's physical appearance. He acknowledged that their enslavement, in part, was based on their physical characteristics, but suggested that all men fall within God's blessing and protection.

¹⁷⁷ Walke's footnote from *Short Remarks*: "What the secondary Causes of such Diversity were I presume not to say."

¹⁷⁸ Walke, *Short Remarks on Slavery & the Treatment of Negroes*.

Following upon this last passage, he noted, “Some Men, I grant, may be superior to theirs in Knowledge or Virtue, but such Superiority can give them no just or natural Right to oppress those who are inferior in these Points. Mental & moral Improvement depend on the Enjoyment of Liberty, an Intercourse with the World, & other incidental Circumstances, but do not confer Power, or Dominion; however, they give a Degree of personal Importance.”¹⁷⁹

Acknowledging that Africans are capable of genius, he cited Phyllis Wheatley, stating that “the Africans are capable of making great Progress in Learning, & some have given Proofs of natural Genius. Benjamin Banneker calculated an Almanac for the year 1792, & is well known in Maryland as a Man of Genius. The Letters of Ignatius Sancho do him Credit; and Phillis (sic) Wheatley who was brought from Africa to Boston at 8 years old & received a tolerable Education wrote good Verses – A Specimen of her Poetry I now give you.” He provided two examples of Wheatley’s poetry, both of which also appeared in English abolitionist Thomas Clarkson’s “An Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species”.¹⁸⁰ In making this assessment, he was pointedly responding directly to Jefferson’s comments about Wheatley and Sancho in his *Notes on Virginia*. Walke’s attitude towards Wheatley and Sancho was radically different than that of Jefferson, who scornfully opined:

¹⁷⁹Ibid.

¹⁸⁰Thomas Clarkson, *An Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species, Particularly the African, Translated from A Latin Dissertation, which was Honoured with the First Prize, in the University of Cambridge, for the Year 1785, with Additions. The Third Edition* (London Printed: Philadelphia: Reprinted by Joseph Cruikshank in Market Street between Second and Third Streets, 1787), 111.

Misery is often the parent of the most affecting touches in poetry. Among the blacks is misery enough, God knows, but no poetry. Love is the particular oestrus of the poet. The love is ardent, but it kindles the senses only, not the imagination. Religion, indeed has produced a Phyllis Wheatley, but it could not produce a poet. The compositions published under her name are below the dignity of criticism...Ignatius Sancho has approached nearer to merit in composition, yet his letters do more honor to the heart than the head.¹⁸¹

Walke appears to have relied heavily on Clarkson for certain elements of “Short Remarks.” His acknowledgement of instances of African intellectual capability is significant because, unlike other writers on slavery of his day, he did not deny their humanity and capacity for intellect. He then described the process by which slaves were obtained, writing, “Slaves are procured on the African Coast from the River Senegal to the farthest Borders of Angola, by various Means. The Number brought from thence in the year 1786 has been stated at one hundred thousand, & it is not thought to be less annually, when the European Nations are at peace. An Hundred thousand more of the African Negroes perish every year; it has been said, in Consequence of the Trade”¹⁸², remarking in his footnotes that “many die on the Passage to America, being confined in Rooms provided for them & in Irons. They are brought upon Deck every Morning if the Weather be good. If not, they suffer from corrupted Air, & many die after their arrival in the West Indies. If three in four survive the Seasoning, the Bargain is reckoned favourable.”¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ Adrienne Koch and William Peden, *The Life and Selected Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, 240.

¹⁸² Walke, *Short Remarks on Slavery & the Treatment of Negroes*.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

Walke borrowed from Clarkson's estimations of the losses in the African slave trade. "Now, as the annual exportation from Africa consists of an hundred thousand men, and as the two orders, of those who are privately kidnapped by individuals, and of those, who are publickly (sic) seized by virtue of the authority of their prince...Many of these unfortunate people have a journey of one thousand miles to perform on foot, and are driven like sheep through inhospitable woods and deserts, where they frequently die in great numbers, from fatigue and want. Now if to those, who thus perish on the African continent, by war and travelling, we subjoin those who afterwards perish on the voyage, and in the seasoning together, it will appear that, in every yearly attempt to supply the colonies, an hundred thousand must perish."¹⁸⁴ Clarkson added in his footnotes that "including the number that perish on the voyage, and in the seasoning...it is generally thought that not half the number purchased can be considered as an additional stock, and of course that 50,000 are consumed within the first two years from their embarkation."¹⁸⁵ Walke's heavy borrowing from Clarkson indicates that the latter's essay on slavery made a deep impression on him.

His description of the Middle Passage, echoes many elements of Clarkson's essay, and he cited a well-known incident in the slave trade, suggesting that the reader consult Clarkson.

By such horrid means are Slaves obtained to be transported into a strange Country, while the most cruel Violence is thereby done to the Rules of Justice & the Feelings of Humanity; While savage Christians are employed in separating Parents from their Children, Wives from their

¹⁸⁴ Clarkson, *An Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species*, 152-153.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 93.

Husbands, and dissolving the bonds of Friendship. After they are received on board the Ships, which are of various Dimensions, they are stowed as close as possible, & the Want of fresh Air brings on the Flux, or a putrid Fever. Suffocated almost with Heat & Stench, while some are fainting, & others dead, the Miseries which the living endure are not to be described; - nor can they be conceived without Disgust and Horror.¹⁸⁶ Those who arrive at the West Indies are sold to the Planters, & Instances have not been wanting of Negroes being destroyed, who were too infirm for Market.¹⁸⁷

Clarkson's own "Essay" reads, "the following instance had been recorded by a writer of the highest reputation, "that the master of a ship, bound to the western colonies with slaves, on a presumption that many of them would die, selected an hundred and thirty-two of the most sickly, and ordered them to be thrown into the sea, to recover their value from the insurers, and, above, all that the fatal order was put into execution." Continuing, he wrote, "Such a fact as this came before a court of justice in this very country..."¹⁸⁸ The incident to which both men referred is that of the slave ship "Zong," captained by Luke Collingwood, that set sail for Jamaica on September 6, 1781 from the coast of Africa, with a cargo of over four hundred slaves. Two months into the voyage, with an outbreak of disease, and fearing his inability to recover potential losses, Collingwood ordered the ship's crew to throw one hundred and thirty-two of the sickest slaves into the sea. Later, ship owner, James Gregson, a partner in a Liverpool slave

¹⁸⁶Walke's in *Short Remarks*: "To shew the Cruelty of which Man is sometimes capable I will mention a Circumstance well known in London. A Captain of a Ship in the year 1781, when He found the Slaves dying in great Numbers, to prevent a Loss which was likely to fall upon his Owners, ordered 132 of those unhappy People to be cast into the Sea, hoping that the Underwriters would be forced to pay the Owners, but upon a trial at Guildhall, it appeared that the Captain's Plea, that Water was scarce on board was utterly false. See Clarkson, p. 98-114."

¹⁸⁷Walke, *Short Remarks on Slavery & the Treatment of Negroes*.

¹⁸⁸Clarkson, *An Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species*, 114.

trading firm, attempted unsuccessfully to recoup his losses by filing a claim with his London insurers.

The significance of the event was to galvanize the anti-slavery activities of Granville Sharp and Clarkson, as well as English essayist James Ramsay. The ability of Walke to recite an account of this atrocity disputes the notion that “though this insurance case did have a profound influence among anti-slave-trade organisers and become iconic in abolitionist literature, there was almost no immediate impact on the public consciousness.”¹⁸⁹ It also speaks to the lack of insularity of Americans to trans-Atlantic intellectual thought. Virginians were not confronting and debating the slave question within an ideological vacuum. Granville Sharp’s abolitionist writings gained substantial traction among America’s founding fathers. He was a correspondent with Benjamin Franklin, John Jay, and John Adams, among others, all of whom received his ideas warmly. Sharp particularly lamented the failure of the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia to remedy the problem of slavery. “When such solemn and unanswerable appeals to the consciences of men, in behalf of humanity and common justice, are disregarded, the crimes of *slave-dealing* and *slave-holding* become *crying sins*, which presumptuously invite the Divine retribution! So that it must be highly dangerous to the political existence of any state, thus duly warned against injustice, to afford the least sanction to such enormities by their legislative authority.”¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁹Srividhya Swaminathan, “Reporting Atrocities: A Comparison of the *Zong* and the Trial of Captain John Kimber,” *Slavery & Abolition*, 31 no. 4, (2010), 483.

Accessed by: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0144039X.2010.521336> on 11/16/2011.

¹⁹⁰Prince Hoare, *Memoirs of Granville Sharp Esq. Composed from his Own Manuscripts and Other Authentic Documents in Possession of his Family and of the African Institution* (London: Printed for Henry Colburn and Co., 1820), 33.

Walke, as a representative to Virginia's Constitutional Convention in 1788, and as a delegate from the state to the first presidential election in Philadelphia the following year, probably met (or knew already) many of the nation's foremost political thinkers, who had been exposed, in various degrees, to Sharp and the work of Anthony Benezet. Benezet, a French-born, American Quaker founded the nation's first anti-slavery organization in Philadelphia, the "Society for the Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage." His work, *A Caution to Great Britain and her Colonies in a Short Representation of the Calamitous State of the Enslaved Negroes in the British Dominions*, was published in Philadelphia in 1785 and gained great intellectual currency among the city's politicians and literati, including Benjamin Franklin. Benezet's anti-slavery efforts mirrored Sharp's in both men's emphasis on outlawing the African slave trade, as opposed to the thornier issue of slavery itself. The reasoning was that, by cutting off the head of the hydra its body would wither. Margaret Abruzzo notes that "critics of slavery stressed the violence of the trade to denaturalize slavery. Brute force and cruelty--not nature or God's design--created slavery."¹⁹¹ This idea of force and violence inheres in Walke's assertion that Europeans destroyed the "tranquility of an unoffending people."¹⁹²

Apart from his correspondence with America's political elite, Sharp also sought to promote the aims of the Protestant American Episcopacy and "the extension of Christian knowledge over a continent where the human mind appeared to him to be just verging to

¹⁹¹ Abruzzo *Polemical Pain*, 186.

¹⁹² Walke, *Short Remarks on Slavery & the Treatment of Negroes*.

maturity, and where he conceived that, consequently, a general diffusion of the precepts contained in the Scriptures might be of the highest avail.”¹⁹³ He accomplished this goal by sending his theological works “to the libraries in all the principal places in America, in order to gain some little influence to enable me to promote Episcopacy throughout the continent.”¹⁹⁴ Most importantly, in England, Sharp received the first two bishops of the American Episcopal Church in January of 1787, and who were consecrated by the Archbishop of Canterbury in the following month. The Right Reverend William White ordained Walke the following year, thus placing all three men in close ideological proximity to one another and within the same sphere of British anti-slavery sentiment. White likely spoke to Walke on Sharp’s ideas, the two men’s acquaintance, and the activities of the anti-slave trade societies in England. The filtering down of British antislavery thought to a Virginia plantation master is understandable, when all these personal and intellectual connections are considered.

Having made arguments to attack slavery from a theological, moral, and ethical basis, Walke proceeded to summarize his thoughts regarding possible remedies for slavery. While the closing of Chapter I ends with the declaration that “...Slavery ought to be abolished,” he adopted a more restrained tone in his conclusion, arguing that “Since it appears that involuntary Servitude or Slavery is inconsistent with the Law of Nature, with Reason, & the Gospel of Christ; since it originated in Error & Iniquity, & has ever been attended with grievous Wrongs, who can hesitate to say that it ought to be gradually

¹⁹³ Hoare, *Memoirs of Granville Sharp Esq.*, 233.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 234.

abolished?”¹⁹⁵ Here he used more moderate language, suggesting that the emancipation process should be more gradual.

The Man, whose Bosom is warmed by a single Spark of Philanthropy, who believes that an overruling Power regards human Actions, who is a Friend to Virtue & Happiness will rejoice to see an End of it. But the Evil is now of such Magnitude that it is not to be removed without much Difficulty. The murderous Commerce ought surely to be universally discontinued. With Regard to Slavery in the United States, the ¹⁹⁶Wisdom of Congress & of the State Assemblies I have no Doubt, will ere long be exerted, & that a happy Change in this Respect will be gradually produced, a Change which will not only eminently redound to the Glory of our Country, but eventually promote her true Interest.¹⁹⁷

Walke, like other white Virginians, felt that free blacks' presence in the state had a deleterious effect upon those who were still enslaved. Socially they held a distinct status, and he often performed marriage ceremonies for them during his ministerial tenure at Old Donation Church. One example was Meshack Africa, whom Walke married to Hannah Fuller, on April 4 1789. Meshack Fuller (in probability Meshack Africa) appeared on a Norfolk County list of taxable individuals in 1794 as a free black and was later listed from 1803 to 1811 in St. Brides Parish under the same racial category.¹⁹⁸ In 1793, the Virginia General Assembly enacted the statute requiring all free blacks to register with the clerk of the court for the jurisdiction in which they lived. This law

¹⁹⁵Walke, *Short Remarks on Slavery & the Treatment of Negroes*.

¹⁹⁶Walke's footnote in *Short Remarks*: "The Congress have the Power of granting Land for their Reception, & the State Governments may form a Plan of general Emancipation to be gradually accomplished."

¹⁹⁷Walke, *Short Remarks on Slavery & the Treatment of Negroes*.

¹⁹⁸Paul Heinegg, "Free African Americans of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Maryland and Delaware."

Accessed by: http://www.freeafricanamericans.com/Abel_Angus.htm on 11/16/2011.

limited their movement and prevented runaway slaves from posing as free blacks and hiring themselves out. By 1806, all freed slaves thereafter were legally compelled to leave Virginia, as a check to the ever-increasing growth of free blacks as a group; however, not all followed the law and departed.¹⁹⁹

United States politicians began to address the question of colonization of free blacks following the American Revolution. One of the most notable individuals to propose the cause of colonization was Thomas Jefferson, who addressed the Virginia state legislature in 1784 on the need and urgency of removing free blacks from the United States.²⁰⁰ Several years earlier, in his work *Notes on Virginia*, Jefferson offered the following sentiment on the condition of the American slave. “For if a slave can have a country in the world, it must be any other in preference to that in which he is born to live and labor for another; in which he must lock up the faculties of his nature, contribute as far as depends on his individual endeavors to the evanishment of the human race, or entail his own miserable condition on the endless generations proceeding from him.”²⁰¹ Jefferson, along with George Wythe, and Edmund Pendleton sat on a committee convened during the first assembly to revise the colonial codes, and they recommended the passage of certain legal revisions, once hostilities with England had ceased. Regarding freedom for slaves, Jefferson proposed the following:

¹⁹⁹“Register of Free blacks” 1822-1861.”

Accessed by: http://www.fairfaxrifles.org/george_lamb.html on 11/16/2011.

²⁰⁰P.J. Staudenraus. *The African Colonization Movement 1816-1865* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), 2.

²⁰¹Adrienne Koch and William Peden, *The Life and Selected Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, 257.

To emancipate all slaves born after passing the act...that they should continue with the parents to a certain age, then to be brought up, at the public expense, to tillage, arts, or sciences, according to their geniuses...when they should be colonized to such place as the circumstances of time should render most proper, sending them out with arms, implements of household and of the handicraft arts....to declare them a free and independent people, and extend to them our alliance and protection...and to send vessels...to other parts of the world for an equal number of white inhabitants.²⁰²

In short, Jefferson hoped to make a transfer of blacks for whites, offering freed slaves a solution and addressing the country's need for cheap labor. This conception of freedom and colonization never bore fruit, but was one of the precursors to later emigration schemes. Walke, writing some twelve years after Jefferson's original *Notes*, took up the conundrum that free blacks posed in Virginia:

It appears to me that the partial Emancipation of Slaves among us has already been attended by Evils unfavourable to social Order, & injurious to those who remain in Servitude. The Liberty granted to some renders Bondage much more irksome to others in their Vicinity, & has a natural Tendency to produce Disobedience & Discontent. Would it not therefore be expedient to make it a Condition of future Emancipation that all freed Negroes should be removed within a limited Time to a Tract of Country to be set apart by the Congress for their Reception with certain fixed Boundaries? – It is evident that a among the extensive Wilds on our western Frontier a proper Place might be found, and....they would soon form a little Colony supported by their own Industry, & carry on Trade with the United States.²⁰³

One of Walke's chief concerns was the disruption of social order. He proceeded to suggest, like Jefferson, that the eliminated slave labor pool might be replaced by

²⁰²Ibid, 237.

²⁰³Walke, *Short Remarks on Slavery & the Treatment of Negroes*.

“Labourers from different Parts of Europe” who “would be induced to migrate hither.”²⁰⁴ Walke undoubtedly would have seen Jefferson’s *Notes*, as he was both personally and politically connected to Jefferson. Both men expounded on the popular subject of emancipation and colonization, and this idea held great intellectual currency among Virginia’s political elite. Jefferson lamented that these changes “will not be taken up till a restoration of peace shall leave to the legislature leisure to go through such a work.”²⁰⁵

Jefferson then answered the question that he felt might be asked, namely “Why not retain and incorporate blacks into the State...?”²⁰⁶ His response relied upon arguments of racial inferiority and incompatibility, unlike Walke, who, while asserting the same colonization argument, made no explicit case for black racial inferiority. Jefferson, elaborating on his racial theories of blacks, posited that “I think one could scarcely be found capable of tracing and comprehending the investigations of Euclid: and that in imagination they are dull, tasteless, and anomalous.” Not content to stop there in his racial analyses, he continued on to assert that “never yet could I find that a black had uttered a thought above the level of plain narration; never saw even an elementary trait of painting or sculpture...,” unlike Indians, who he observed do not live among whites, but “will often carve figures on their pages not destitute of design and merit.”²⁰⁷ Jefferson’s core fear was racial contamination, and he offered the example of the emancipation of Roman slaves to make his point. “Among the Romans

²⁰⁴Ibid.

²⁰⁵Adrienne Koch and William Peden, *The Life and Selected Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, 236.

²⁰⁶Ibid, 238.

²⁰⁷Ibid, 239.

emancipation required but one effort. The slave, when made free, might mix with, without staining the blood of the master. But with us a second is necessary, unknown to history. When freed, he is to be removed beyond the reach of mixture.”²⁰⁸ This argument is all the more ironic, given the fact that twentieth-century DNA studies have offered evidence that Jefferson was the probable father of at least one of his slave Sally Hemings’s children.²⁰⁹

Nowhere in his essay did Walke make a case for black racial inferiority; instead he argued that “The Negro enjoying the Blessings of Freedom would become a more exalted Being, the Powers of his Mind expanding as his Liberty was increased. The Exertion of Genius would be more frequent among the sable Race, & many of them imitating Examples which they had seen would become useful & valuable members of their new Colony”, and “That domestick Tyranny, which renders Masters & Slaves miserable would cease, while hired Servants would perform with Alacrity the Duties of Husbandry, & every menial Office.”²¹⁰ His argument drew upon Jefferson’s colonization schemes, but it was more generous and humane in its assessment of the prospects of black freedom. He was suggesting, though, that they would be “imitating Examples”; hence, their talents would be derivative.

²⁰⁸Ibid, 243.

²⁰⁹“Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings: A Brief Account.”

Accessed by: <http://www.monticello.org/site/plantation-and-slavery/thomas-jefferson-and-sally-hemings-brief-account> on 11/16/2011.

In January 2000, the Thomas Jefferson Foundation formed a committee to study the long-standing claim that Jefferson had fathered some or all of Sally Hemings’s children. The DNA study found that the data suggested the strong probability that Thomas Jefferson was the father of at least Eston Hemings, a son of Sally. Subsequent findings commissioned by other parties have claimed that paternity could be ascribed to one of several male Jefferson relatives.

²¹⁰Walke, *Short Remarks on Slavery & the Treatment of Negroes*.

Although Jefferson's ruminations on the emancipation question are by far the best known, this was part of a much larger discussion on the issue that was transpiring in the last decade of the eighteenth century and one on which Walke felt obliged to proffer an opinion. Various American politicians began to agitate for the deportation and colonization of free blacks, particularly since the United States government had just acquired the Louisiana Purchase, and colonization there seemed a desirable solution for slave owners wishing to deal with the question of freedmen. St. George Tucker, the widely esteemed law professor at the College of William & Mary, advocated using this newly acquired territory as a means of sending free blacks far from areas where slavery was still a thriving institution. Later, in the first few years of the nineteenth century, the Virginia House of Delegates also considered the establishment of a penal colony for unruly slaves and black criminals.²¹¹

Tucker, like Jefferson and John Marshall, was the legal protégé of George Wythe; he also probably exerted some influence on Walke's notions of emancipation and colonization, and vice-versa. Tucker's famous work on slavery appeared three years after Walke's essay on the same topic, and while their positions bear certain similarities, they also diverge. The two men shared both intellectual and family connections. Tucker married the widow of Walke's uncle John Randolph, in 1788, making him a step-uncle to Walke and a step-father of Walke's cousin, John Randolph of Roanoke, although both he and Walke were approximately the same age. Tucker also instructed Reverend Anthony's son, Anthony, in the study of the law, when Anthony

²¹¹Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement 1816-1865*, 4.

Junior matriculated at the College in 1799. Walke wrote to Tucker in April of that year, desiring that his son study under the prominent jurist. Tucker agreed to take his son on as a pupil, and his efforts paid off. Anthony Walke IV functioned as a magistrate and justice of the peace for Princess Anne County for several decades until his death at the age of forty-two in 1820. It is highly probable that, given their common age, family connection, and social positions, Tucker and Walke had frequent contact on matters of political and intellectual currency.

In his 1796 work, *A Dissertation on Slavery*, Tucker acknowledged the influence of the correspondence of several men in the development of his work, i.e., Jeremy Belknap, D.D. of Boston and Zephaniah Swift, a congressional representative from Connecticut. Tucker denounced the continued existence of slavery, but pondered the practicality of an immediate and unconditional emancipation. Here he echoed the concerns of Walke, when he suggested that there are material considerations to consider before blacks could be free.

Yet human prudence forbids that we should precipitately engage in a work of such hazard as a general and simultaneous emancipation...To expel them all at once, from the United States, would in fact be to devote them only to a lingering death by famine, by disease, and other accumulated miseries...To retain them among us, would be nothing more than to throw so many of the human race upon the earth without the means of subsistence: they would soon become idle, profligate, and miserable. Unfit for their new condition, and unwilling to return to their former laborious course, they would become the caterpillars of the earth, and the tigers of the human race.²¹²

²¹²St. George Tucker, *A Dissertation on Slavery*, 79.

Walke, interestingly, was also concerned about the continued presence of free blacks within the “Bosom of our Country.” Elements of self-serving rationalization inhere in both men’s arguments, i.e., that the immediate expulsion of freed slaves or the prospect of colonizing them on “a Spot on the African Coast” would bring them harm. At the same time, paternalism did require of them, as masters, to look towards the care and well-being of their dependents. In neither case, did Tucker, or Walke, consider the agency of blacks, as individuals. As had long been the pattern of slaveholding society, they were white men making decisions about blacks’ futures. Both men concurred that the continued presence of free blacks among whites was fraught with peril. Walke voiced his concern about the prospects of African colonization, when he wrote:

As to the Mode proposed, or any other which could be devised, Difficulties will be found & Objections made, but I trust that the mighty Reasons in the opposite Scale will ultimately preponderate. It may be apprehended by some that such a Colony established on our western Frontier would in Time become hostile & troublesome, but I answer that an Enemy nursed within the Bosom of our Country would be much more formidable, & of all Evils that this ought most cautiously to be prevented. A Spot on the African Coast for their Reception may be thought more eligible, but there they must encounter the Dangers of an unwholesome Climate, & the Attacks of Foes much too powerful.²¹³

Virginia writers may have been responding to the largely failed enterprise of Sierra Leone. During the American Revolution, slaves captured by British forces were resettled in the Canadian province of Nova Scotia, or transported back to England, where many of them found abject conditions in which to live. In 1786, a group of wealthy

²¹³Walke, *Short Remarks on Slavery & the Treatment of Negroes*.

British humanitarians sought to clean up the London slums by sending its blacks, as well as those of Nova Scotia, to a colony to be formed on the river in Sierra Leone. After convincing this group on the virtues of a return to Africa, the first ship sailed from England for Sierra Leone in February of 1787. It included a group of 350 black emigrants, stocked with provisions to form a colony.²¹⁴ After the colony foundered, due to death, disease and internal strife, a British trading company assumed its control. The company immediately restructured the colony, much to its detriment. French ships nearly destroyed the colony in 1794, after which time its management reverted to the British government. By 1808, the British government officially assumed the colonial administration of Sierra Leone. Back in London, an organization called the African Institution, formed in 1807, with the purpose of governing Sierra Leone's trade and internal affairs, controlled many of the colony's internal affairs. Many of its members held trading interests in Sierra Leone and at the same time professed an avowed hatred of slavery; however, the overriding goal of the Institution was to maintain Sierra Leone as a British trading center, to the exclusion of American and other foreign interests. Thus, this early attempt to establish a freed slave beachhead on the coast of Africa presented a discouraging counterpoint to the argument that African resettlement was realistically possible.

Tucker echoed Walke's concerns about an internal colony, by warning that "to establish such a colony in the territory of the United States, would probably lay the foundation of intestine wars, which terminate only in their extirpation or final expulsion.

²¹⁴Ibid.

To attempt it in any other quarter of the globe would be attended with utmost cruelty to the colonists themselves and the destruction of their whole race.”²¹⁵ He then offered a devious argument for the abolition of slavery; namely, blacks should be freed gradually, but denied civil rights, so as to encourage them to not live among whites. The “restrictions” he proposed “may appear to favour strongly of prejudice”, a sentiment from which he admitted he was not exempt. “Though I am opposed to the banishment of the Negroes, I wish not to encourage their future residence among us. By denying them the most valuable privileges which civil government affords, I wished to render it their inclination and their interest to seek those privileges in some other climate.”²¹⁶

Walke considered the removal of blacks and the abolition of slavery as the desired outcome, suggesting that the more removed the better. He remarked that it may take many years to effect this transition, but trusted that the United States could accomplish this goal, because America was a land “where civil Liberty hath erected her Standard & reigns triumphant, where Errors sanctified by Time shrink from the Light of Reason & Truth...”²¹⁷ He feared, though, that many years will elapse before an Event of such Magnitude can be accomplished.” In the meantime, masters should be benevolent towards their slaves and make them “as happy as their Situation will admit.”²¹⁸ For Walke, the education of slaves and reformation of their morals was a key objective. He did not address the issue of rights of blacks as prospective citizens. Remarking that all

²¹⁵Tucker, *A Dissertation on Slavery*, 84.

²¹⁶*Ibid*, 94.

²¹⁷Walke, *Short Remarks on Slavery & the Treatment of Negroes*.

²¹⁸Walke’s footnote in *Short Remarks*: “Without Labour & a proper Cultivation of the Ground the Masters & Slaves must suffer the Want of common Necessaries, & a Habit of Industry will promote their mutual Good.”

men are “regarded by their Creator with an equal Eye who views with Tenderness the whole human Race, - that the tawny Indian, the sooty African, as well as the fair European are Objects of his Clemency, owing their Existence to this Bounty, & all bearing the Impression of the Divine Hand, he asked his reader to love their neighbor as themselves, that they have a natural & equitable Claim to general Benevolence.”²¹⁹ He reminded the reader in his conclusion that submission to the law is essential for the prevention of anarchy, but that the “Fetters of Tyranny bring Nothing but Wretchedness & disgrace human Nature.”²²⁰ Once again, he invoked the image of slaveholders as tyrants.

When Reverend Anthony Walke wrote out his will in March of 1814, some five months before his death, he had the opportunity to lend action to his ideas of abolition; in fact, he did nothing. To his surviving second wife, Anne Newton Fisher Walke, he gave “the use of half of my Houses & Plantation at Fairfields on the west side of the Great Bridge Road, the use of three Beds & Furniture, my House & Kitchen Furniture (except Beds & the Furniture) not already granted by deed, the use of Negroes Ishmail, George the waiter, old black George, Peter, Africa, Cuffy, Patty, Joan, Matilda & Venus,”²²¹ as well as money, furniture and use of his coach and carriage. To his daughter Anne M. Walke, he bequeathed “the use of a lot & brick house with two tenements behind the academy in Norfolk, of a negroe Boy & Girl of a bed & furniture in her possession & two hundred pounds to my daughter Anne M. Walke, until she may have a child, & then to

²¹⁹Walke, *Short Remarks on Slavery & the Treatment of Negroes*.

²²⁰Walke’s footnote in *Short Remarks*: “When Vedius Pollo ordered one of his Slaves, for a slight Fault, to be cut into Pieces & thrown into a Fish Pond, Augustus commanded him to emancipate not only that, but all his Slaves. The Condition of Slaves is best under arbitrary governments.”

²²¹Will of Reverend Anthony Walke III.

her & her heirs.” After apportioning slaves to his other children, he finally specified that “I give my negroes not already disposed of, to be equally divided among my Sons, except Anthony, reckoning those already given to Edwin as in his Share.” Walke’s *Short Remarks* is a powerful indictment of the institution of slavery; however, at the very moment that he could have emancipated his own slaves, he refused to do so. Perhaps concerned for his own family’s fortunes, or having had a change of heart on the viability of emancipation, he failed to bestow liberty in the specific that he so easily conceived of in the abstract. Had he lived a year or two more, he may have done so, had he wished. The War of 1812 foreshortened any continuation of the question of emancipation. Upon its conclusion, the colonization discussion resumed over the issue of what to do with free blacks. Southern slaveholders formulated an appealing solution in the creation of the American Colonization Society, an aim to which, at least, Anthony Walke’s son, David, subscribed. David Meade Walke’s will, probated after his death on June 9, 1854, stipulated that, upon his wife’s death, his slaves were to be freed, given \$200 a piece, and a paid passage to Liberia²²² Freedom for all the Walke family slaves had to wait; it eventually came through the general emancipation brought about by the Union occupation of Norfolk during the Civil War.

The genesis of the American Colonization Society lay with Robert Finley, a Presbyterian minister and future president of the University of Georgia, who, along with a few other white leaders, formed the beginnings of the American Colonization Society (ACS) in Washington, D.C. in 1816. Another key figure in this new organization was

²²²Will of David M. Walke: Library of Virginia, City of Norfolk Will Books 7 & 8, Reel No. 22, 1841-1868 (n.p.).

Samuel Mills, the founder of the American Bible Society. The stated purpose of the ACS was “...concerned with resolving the national question of an ‘intermediate species of population’ in a republic.”²²³ This “intermediate species” refers to free blacks, whose indeterminate legal status in American society seemed insoluble. At the core of the Society’s beliefs was the assumption that blacks and whites were not racially or socially equal and could not be integrated. However, in the minds of some American ministers, the elevated condition of the emancipated slave, compared to his heathen African brethren, made him ideal for Christianizing and civilizing the Dark Continent. “African colonization is a great Christian mission, which has the fervent prayers of Christians of all creeds in Virginia, and it is annually commended with unanimous voices...as God’s plan for the regeneration of Africa.”²²⁴ The Society, unlike other benevolent organizations, sought funding from state legislatures and the national government with the aim of purchasing land in Africa on which free blacks could be settled. Many states developed auxiliary societies, the most notable of which was Virginia.

The state had been transitioning for some time from a slave-dependent economy, but, nonetheless, still contained the highest number of enslaved and free blacks.²²⁵ Particularly port towns, such as Norfolk, Chesapeake, Richmond, and Fredericksburg, where there were large concentrations of free blacks, developed vigorous chapters of the ACS. The local societies prospected for donations, composed speeches for their organizational meetings and sold subscriptions to their journal, the *African Repository*

²²³Marie Tyler-McGraw, *An African Republic: Black and White Virginians in the Making of Liberia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 27.

²²⁴Slaughter, *Genealogical and Historical Notes on Culpeper County, Virginia*, viii.

²²⁵*Ibid*, 39.

and Colonial Journal. ²²⁶ The largest number of black emigrants to the newly formed country of Liberia was from Virginia. In fact, one third of all emigrants to Liberia from 1820 through the 1860s were from the state. North Carolina and Maryland were the other two Upper South states that provided the remainder of the emigrants. In particular, after Nat Turner's rebellion that occurred in August of 1831, a high percentage of free blacks from Southampton County Virginia (Turner's home county) comprised those individuals heading to Liberia. Violence against Southampton's free blacks reached such a crescendo after Turner's rebellion that many felt no option other than to embark for Africa. As Phillip Slaughter notes, "Southampton County emigration in total, both before and after Nat Turner, was as important to Liberia's early history as was the emigration from Richmond, Petersburg and Norfolk."²²⁷ The port of Norfolk Virginia was often the departure point for those ships bound for Liberia. From 1820, with the docking of the first ship *Elizabeth*, until 1832, the majority of emigrants were free blacks. After 1832, most emigrants were escaped or emancipated slaves.²²⁸ Many of the freed or escaped slaves embarking for Liberia in the first few decades of the nineteenth century came from the Tidewater, and some may have originally belonged to the Walke family.

Even in his wildest imagination, Anthony Walke could not have conceived so rapid a transition in the social order of the world into which he was born and the world which he exited. His writings are significant in that they represent a very advanced view of a Virginia plantation master and child of the Enlightenment, and they adumbrate the

²²⁶Ibid, 40.

²²⁷Ibid, 72.

²²⁸Ibid, 128.

evolution of the slave question for Virginia. Walke was unique because he held extremely egalitarian views towards blacks for a man of his era; however, he was still very much a product of the eighteenth century and his social upbringing ultimately constrained his ability to make his personal reality correspond to his intellectual aspirations. His work reveals the intellectual possibilities that abounded in the 1790s, as men of his generation wrestled with the question of slavery, one of the most compelling moral issues of their day. His inability to act -- to take the decisive step of making his intellectual life conform to action -- is one of the great conundrums of him as an individual, and it reveals his tremendous personal complexity. His ruminations on blacks and slavery are unique, given the time and place of his life; his inability to transcend his own community's social bounds was not.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

List Of Anthony Walke's Tithables, Lands, and Wheel Carriages for the Year 1775²²⁹

Anthony Walke, Thomas Booth, Anthony Walke, Jr., John Tipsing?
John Walke, Robert Keeling, William Dolby

Negros at Fairfields

Jemmy, Jemmy, Jemmy, Jemmy, Jemmy, Jemmy, Frank, America, Bow, Mexico,
London, Tony, Will, Philip, Jack, Jack, Joe, Cuffy, Bob, Ishmael, Sam, George,
Caesar, Sam, Argal, Laurence, NAME ILLEGIBLE, Africa, Whitehaven, Roger,
Stratford, Absalom, Matt, Joe, Phebe, Sue, Isabella, Isabella, Nanny, Sarah, Pleasant,
Pleasant, Chloe, Maria, NAME ILLEGIBLE, NAME ILLEGIBLE, Molly, Nancy,
Bridget, Lucinda, Agga, Rose, Amy, Judith, Patty, Patty Lydia, Juba, Bab, Jenny,
Hannah, Betty

At the Ferry Plantation

Daniel Benthall, Overseer
Sharper, Rachel, Bow, Cook, Europe

At Thurston's Bridge

Augustine Brounley, Overseer,
Jeffery, Caesar, Clarinda, Phillis, Suba, ILLEGIBLE, Solly

At the Quarter called Nicholson's

Charles Harvey, Overseer
Jemmy, Jonas, Tom, Sall?

At the Church Quarter

Chancy Bush, Overseer
Ben, Scipio, Kent, ILLEGIBLE, Tommy

At the Plantation near the Sea Side

William Goldsby, Overseer
Highgate
7,248 $\frac{3}{4}$ Acres of Land

and A Chariot and three ?

²²⁹This List of Tithables refers to the property of Anthony Walke II, father of Reverend Anthony. Belinda Nash, the director for the Ferry Farm house museum in Virginia Beach provided a photocopy of the original to the author during the latter's trip to Virginia Beach in March 2011.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photograph A



A post-March 1865 photo of the old burial ground and plantation kitchen at Fairfield, with the cook's quarters attached. The provenance is unknown. The plantation house is not visible, thus dating it after the fire that destroyed the manor. The large wheel on the right is suggestive of a military wagon. This photo may have been taken by Union occupying forces. The headstones and markers were moved in the 1920s by the Princess Anne Garden Club to Old Donation Church; however the bodies remain *in situ* in what is now Fairfield's subdivision on what is now Locke Lane.

Photograph B



A photo of unknown provenance of an older female slave posed with a spinning wheel in front of the plantation kitchen. The poor condition of the shutters and roof indicate that this photo was taken during war-time conditions or immediately thereafter, possibly during the Union occupation of Norfolk by a military photographer. The kitchen was later converted into a residence, but was eventually demolished in the 1970s.

Photograph C



Portrait of Mrs. Anthony Walke II, née Jane Bolling Randolph
(1729-1756)

Date Unknown

John Wollaston (English, 1710-after 1775)

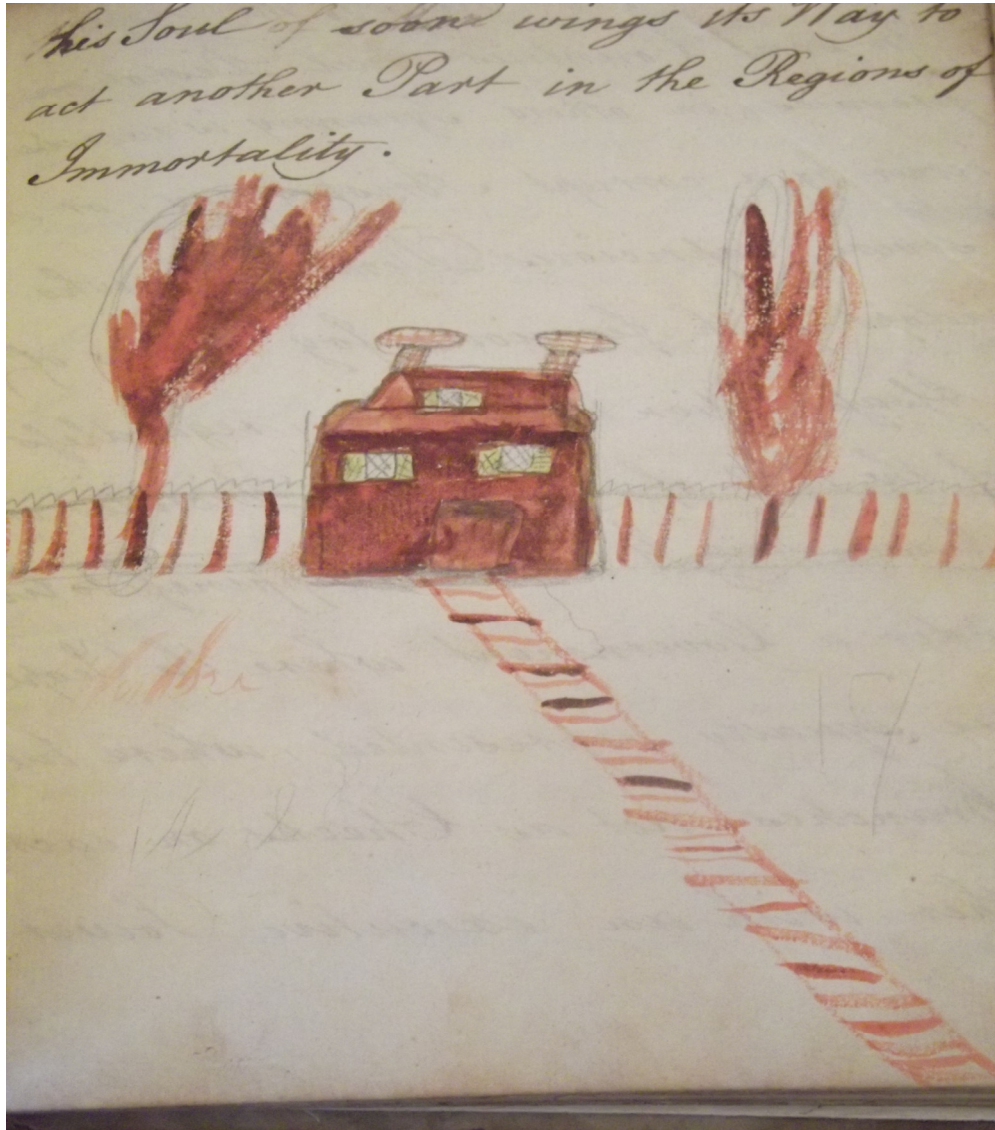
Oil on canvas, 36 ¼ x 28 ¼ ins. (92.1 x 71.8 cm)

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. O. W. June, 1963.005

Property of the Muscarelle Museum,
the College of William and Mary

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Photograph D



A drawing of a house, possibly a rendition of Fairfields, found in Walke's compilation *To the Reader*. The sketch may have been done by a child. The structure of the roof and chimneys is suggestive of the Dutch-style homes that were prevalent in Princess Anne in the seventeenth century. If this is a depiction of Fairfields, then it is the only known image of the house.

(Property of the Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky)

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